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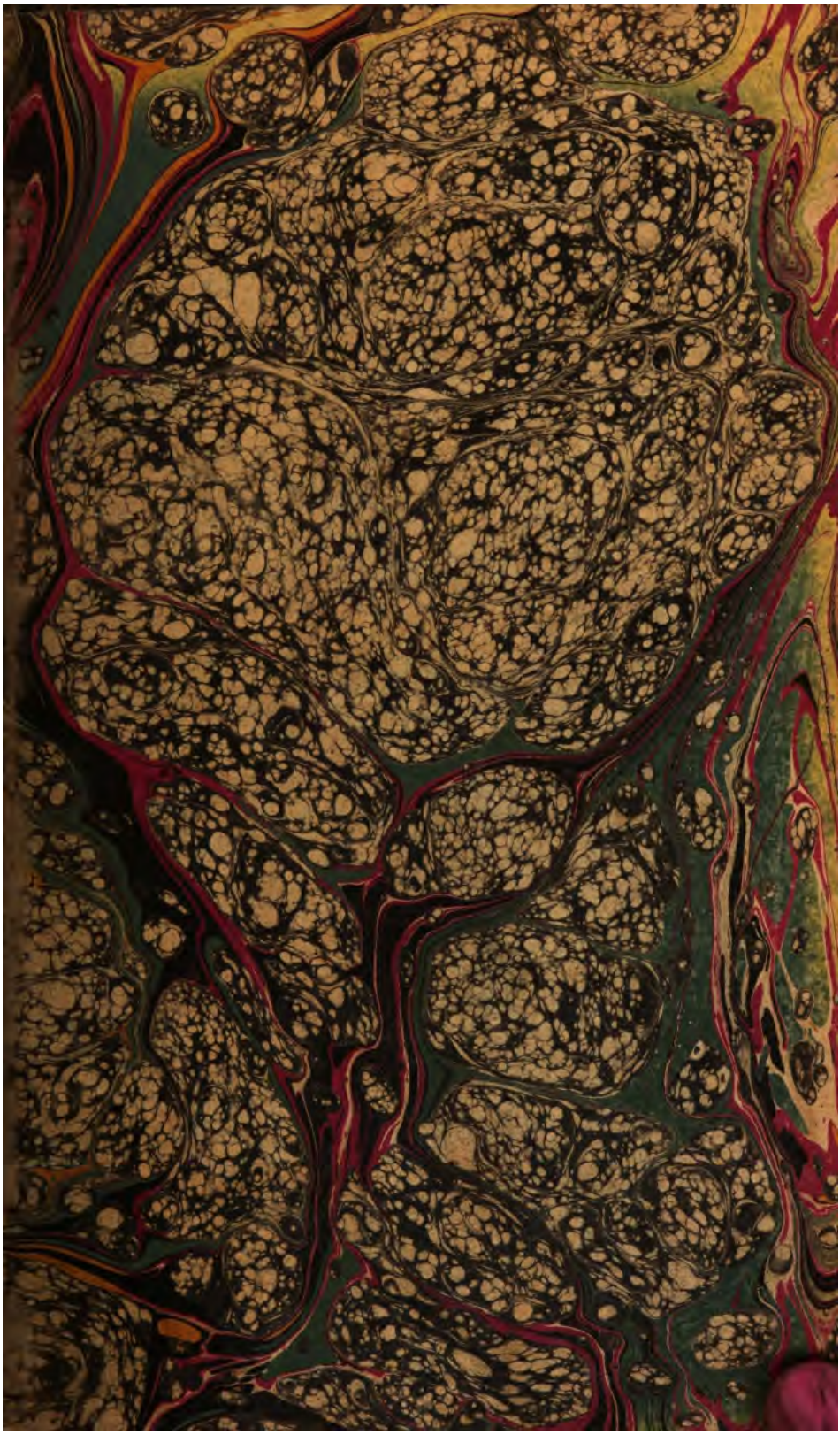

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THE

WORKS

OF

MR. JAMES THOMSON,

WITH HIS LAST

CORRECTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS.

IN THREE VOLUMES COMPLETE.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

PATRICK MURDOCH, D.D. F.R.S.

VOL. II.

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BRITANNIA;

A

POEM.

——Et tantas audetis tollere moles?
Quos ego—sed motos præstat componere fluctus.
Post mihi non simili pœna commissa luetis.
Maturate fugam, regique hæc dicite vestro:
Non illi imperium pelagi, sævumque tridentem,
Sed mihi sorte datum.—— VIRO.

AS on the sea-beat shore *Britannia* sat,
Of her degenerate sons the faded fame,
Deep in her anxious heart, revolving sad:
Bare was her throbbing bosom to the gale,
That hoarse, and hollow, from the bleak surge blew;
Loose flow'd her tresses; rent her azure robe.
Hung o'er the deep, from her majestic brow
She tore the laurel, and she tore the bay.
Nor ceas'd the copious grief to bathe her cheek;
Nor ceas'd her sobs to murmur to the main.
Peace discontented nigh, departing, stretch'd

Her dove-like wings. And War, tho' greatly rous'd,
Yet mourns his fetter'd hands. While thus the queen
Of nations spoke; and what she said the muse
Recorded, faithful, in unbidden verse.
Even not yon sail, that, from the sky-mixt wave,
Dawns on the sight, and wafts the ROYAL YOUTH*,
A freight of future glory to my shore;
Even not the flattering view of golden days,
And rising periods yet of bright renown,
Beneath the PARENTS, and their endless line
Thro' late revolving time, can sooth my rage;
While, unchastis'd, the insulting *Spaniard* dares
Infest the trading flood, full of vain war
Despise my navies, and my merchants seize;
As, trusting to false peace, they fearless roam
The world of waters wild; made, by the toil,
And liberal blood of glorious ages, mine:
Nor bursts my sleeping thunder on their head.
Whence this unwonted patience? this weak doubt?
This tame beseeching of rejected peace?
This meek forbearance? this unnative fear,
To generous *Britons* never known before?
And sail'd my fleets for this; on *Indian* tides
To float, unactive, with the veering winds?
The mockery of war! while hot disease,
And sloth distemper'd, swept off burning crowds,
For action ardent; and amid the deep,
Inglorious, sunk them in a watery grave.
There now they lie beneath the rolling flood,
Far from their friends, and country, unaveng'd;
And back the drooping war-ship comes again,
Dispirited, and thin; her sons asham'd
Thus idly to review their native shore;

* FREDERIC Prince of WALES, then lately arrived.

With not one glory sparkling in their eye,
One triumph in their tongue. A passenger,
The violated merchant comes along;
That far-sought wealth, for which the noxious gale
He drew, and sweat beneath equator suns,
By lawless force detain'd; a force that soon
Would melt away, and every spoil resign,
Were once the *British* lion heard to roar.
Whence is it that the proud *Iberian* thus,
In their own well-asserted element,
Dares rouse to wrath the masters of the main?
Who told him, that the big incumbent war
Would not, ere this, have roll'd his trembling ports
In smoky ruin? and his guilty stores,
Won by the ravage of a butcher'd world,
Yet unaton'd, sunk in the swallowing deep,
Or led the glittering prize into the *Thames?*
There was a time (O let my languid sons
Resume their spirit at the rousing thought!)
When all the pride of *Spain*, in one dread fleet,
Swell'd our the lab'ring surge; like a whole heaven
Of clouds, wide-roll'd before the boundless breeze.
Gaily the splendid armament along
Exultant plough'd, reflecting a red gleam,
As sunk the sun, o'er all the flaming Vast;
Tall, gorgeous, and elate; drunk with the dream
Of easy conquest; while their bloated war,
Stretch'd out from sky to sky, the gather'd force
Of ages held in its capacious womb.
But soon, regardless of the cumbrous pomp,
My dauntless *Britons* came, a gloomy few,
With tempest black, the goodly scene deform'd,
And laid their glory waste. The bolts of Fate
Resistless thunder'd thro' their yielding sides;

Fierce o'er their beauty blaz'd the lurid flame;
And seiz'd in horrid grasp, or shatter'd wide,
Amid the mighty waters deep they sunk.
Then too from every promontory chill,
Rank fen, and cavern where the wild wave works,
I swept confederate winds, and swell'd a storm.
Round the glad isle, snatch'd by the vengeful blast,
The scatter'd remnants drove; on the blind shelve,
And pointed rock, that marks th' indented shore,
Relentless dash'd, where loud the northern main
Howls thro' the fractur'd *Caledonian* isles.
Such were the dawnings of my watery reign;
But since how vast it grew, how absolute,
Even in those troubled times, when dreadful *Blake*
Aw'd angry nations with the *British* name,
Let every humbled state, let *Europe* say,
Sustain'd and balanc'd, by my naval arm.
Ah what must those immortal spirits think
Of your poor shifts? Those, for their country's good,
Who fac'd the blackest danger, knew no fear,
No mean submission, but commanded peace.
Ah how with indignation must they burn;
(If aught, but joy, can touch etherial breasts)
With shame! with grief! to see their feeble sons
Shrink from that empire o'er the conquer'd seas,
For which their wisdom plann'd, their councils glow'd,
And their veins bled thro' many a toiling age.
Oh first of human blessings! and supreme!
Fair *Peace!* how lovely, how delightful thou!
By whose wide tie, the kindred sons of men,
Like brothers live, in amity combin'd,
And unsuspicious faith; while honest toil
Gives every joy, and to those joys a right,
Which idle, barbarous rapine but usurps.

Pure is thy reign; when, unaccurs'd by blood,
Nought, save the sweetness of indulgent showers,
Trickling distils into the vernant glebe;
Instead of mangled carcasses, sad-seen,
When the blythe sheaves lie scattered o'er the field;
When only shining shares, the crooked knife,
And hooks imprint the vegetable wound;
When the land blushes with the rose alone,
The falling fruitage and the bleeding vine.
Oh, Peace! thou source, and soul of social life!
Beneath whose calm inspiring influence,
Science his views enlarges, Art refines,
And swelling Commerce opens all her ports;
Blest be the man divine, who gives us thee!
Who bids the trumpet hush his horrid clang,
Nor blow the giddy nations into rage;
Who sheaths the murderous blade; the deadly gun
Into the well-pil'd armory returns;
And, every vigour from the work of death,
To grateful industry converting, makes
The country flourish, and the city smile.
Unviolated, him the virgin sings;
And him the smiling mother to her train.
Of him the shepherd, in the peaceful dale
Chaunts; and the treasures of his labour sure,
The husbandman of him, as at the plough,
Or team, he toils. With him the sailor sooths,
Beneath the trembling moon, the midnight wave;
And the full city, warm, from street to street,
And shop to shop, responsive, rings of him.
Nor joys one land alone; his praise extends
Far as the sun rolls the diffusive day;
Far as the breeze can bear the gifts of peace,
Till all the happy nations catch the song.

What would not, Peace! the patriot bear for thee?
What painful patience? What incessant care?
What mixt anxiety? What sleepless toil?
Even from the rash protected what reproach?
For he thy value knows; thy friendship he
To human nature: but the better thou,
The richer of delight, sometimes the more
Inevitable war; when ruffian force
Awakes the fury of an injur'd state.
Even the good patient man, whom reason rules,
Rous'd by bold insult, and injurious rage,
With sharp, and sudden check, th' astonish'd sons
Of violence confounds; firm as his cause,
His bolder heart; in awful justice clad;
His eyes effulging a peculiar fire:
And, as he charges thro' the prostrate war,
His keen arm teaches faithless men, no more
To dare the sacred vengeance of the just.
And what, my thoughtless sons, should fire you more
Than when your well-earn'd empire of the deep
The least beginning injury receives?
What better cause can call your lightning forth?
Your thunder wake? your dearest life demand?
What better cause, than when your country sees
The sly destruction at her vitals aim'd?
For oh it much imports you, 'tis your all,
To keep your trade intire, intire the force
And honour of your fleets; o'er that to watch,
Even with a hand severe, and jealous eye.
In intercourse be gentle, generous, just,
By wisdom polish'd, and of manners fair;
But on the sea be terrible, untam'd,
Unconquerable still; let none escape,
Who shall but aim to touch your glory there.

Is there the man, into the lion's den
Who dares intrude, to snatch his young away?
And is a *Briton* seiz'd? and seiz'd beneath
The slumbering terrors of a *British* fleet?
Then ardent rise! Oh great in vengeance rise!
O'erturn the proud, teach rapine to restore:
And as you ride sublimely round the world,
Make every vessel stoop, make every state
At once their welfare and their duty know.
This is your glory; this your wisdom; this
The native power for which you were design'd
By Fate, when Fate design'd the firmest state,
That e'er was seated on the subject sea;
A state alone where *Liberty* should live,
In these late times, this evening of mankind,
When *Athens*, *Rome*, and *Carthage* are no more,
The world almost in slavish sloth dissolv'd.
For this, these rocks around your coast were thrown,
For this, your oaks, peculiar harden'd, shoot
Strong into sturdy growth; for this, your hearts
Swell with a sullen courage, growing still
As danger grows; and strength and toil for this
Are liberal pour'd o'er all the fervent land.
Then cherish this, this unexpensive power,
Undangerous to the Public, ever prompt,
By lavish Nature thrust into your hand:
And, unencumber'd with the bulk immense
Of conquest, whence huge empires rose, and fell
Self-crush'd, extend your reign from shore to shore,
Where'er the wind your high behests can blow;
And fix it deep on this eternal base.
For should the sliding fabric once give way,
Soon slackened quite, and past recovery broke,
It gathers ruin as it rolls along,

Steep-rushing down to that devouring gulph,
Where many a mighty empire buried lies.
And should the big redundant flood of trade,
In which ten thousand thousand labours join
Their several currents, till the boundless tide
Rolls in a radiant deluge o'er the land;
Should this bright stream, the least inflected, point
Its course another way, o'er other lands
The various treasure would resistless pour,
Ne'er to be won again; its ancient tract
Left a vile channel, desolate, and dead,
With all around a miserable waste.
Not *Egypt*, were, her better heaven, the *Nile*
Turn'd in the pride of flow; when o'er his rocks,
And roaring cataracts, beyond the reach
Of dizzy vision pil'd, in one wide flash
An *Ethiopian* deluge foams amain;
(Whence wondering fable trac'd him from the sky)
Even not that prime of earth, where harvests crowd
On untill'd harvests, all the teeming year,
If of the fat o'erflowing culture robb'd,
Were then a more uncomfortable wild,
Steril, and void; than of her trade depriv'd,
Britons, your boasted isle: her princes sunk;
Her high-built honour moulder'd to the dust;
Unnerv'd her force; her spirit vanish'd quite;
With rapid wing her riches fled away;
Her unfrequented ports alone the sign
Of what she was; her merchants scatter'd wide;
Her hollow shops shut up; and in her streets,
Her fields, woods, markets, villages, and roads,
The cheerful voice of labour heard no more.
Oh let not then waste Luxury impair
That manly soul of toil, which strings your nerves,

And your own proper happiness creates.
Oh let not the soft, penetrating plague
Creep on the free-born mind: and working there,
With the sharp tooth of many a new-form'd want,
Endless, and idle all, eat out the heart
Of *Liberty*; the high conception blast;
The noble sentiment, th' impatient scorn
Of base subjection, and the swelling wish
For general good, erazing from the mind:
While nought save narrow selfishness succeeds,
And low design, the sneaking passions all
Let loose, and reigning in the rankled breast.
Induc'd at last, by scarce-perceiv'd degrees,
Sapping the very frame of government,
And life, a total dissolution comes;
Sloth, ignorance, dejection, flattery, fear,
Oppression raging o'er the waste he makes;
The human being almost quite extinct;
And the whole state in broad corruption sinks.
Oh shun that gulph: that gaping ruin shun!
And countless ages roll it far away
From you, ye heaven-belov'd! may *Liberty*,
The light of life! the sun of human-kind!
Whence heroes, bards, and patriots borrow flame,
Even where the keen depressive North descends,
Still spread, exalt, and actuate your powers!
While slavish southern climates beam in vain.
And may a public spirit from the *throne*,
Where every virtue sits, go copious forth,
Live o'er the land! the finer arts inspire;
Make thoughtful Science raise his pensive head,
Blow the fresh bay, bid Industry rejoice,
And the rough sons of lowest Labour smile.
As when, profuse of Spring, the loosened West

Lifts up the pining year, and balmy breathes
Youth, life, and love, and beauty o'er the world.
But haste we from these melancholy shores,
Nor to deaf winds, and waves, our fruitless plaint
Pour weak; the country claims our active aid;
That let us roam; and where we find a spark
Of public virtue, blow it into flame.
Lo! now my sons, the sons of freedom! meet
In awful senate; thither let us fly;
Burn in the patriot's thought, flow from his tongue
In fearless truth; myself, transform'd, preside,
And shed the spirit of *Britannia* round.
This said; her fleeting form, and airy train,
Sunk in the gale; and nought but ragged rocks
Rush'd on the broken eye; and nought was heard
But the rough cadence of the dashing wave.

LIBERTY;

A

POEM.

TO

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

FREDERIC,

PRINCE OF WALES.

SIR,

WHEN I reflect upon that ready condescension, that preventing generosity, with which YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS received the following Poem under your protection; I can alone ascribe it to the recommendation, and influence of the subject. In you the cause and concerns of Liberty have so zealous a patron, as entitles whatever may have the least tendency to promote them, to the distinction of your favour. And who can entertain this delightful reflection, without feeling a pleasure far superior to that of the fondest author; and of which all true lovers of their country must participate? To behold the noblest dispositions of the prince, and of the patriot, united: an overflowing benevolence, generosity, and candour of heart, joined to an enlightened zeal for Liberty, an intimate persuasion that on it depends the happiness and glory both of kings and people: to see these shining out in public virtues, as they have hitherto

smiled in all the social lights and private accomplishments of life, is a prospect that cannot but inspire a general sentiment of satisfaction and gladness, more easy to be felt than expressed.

If the following attempt to trace Liberty, from the first ages down to her excellent establishment in GREAT BRITAIN, can at all merit your approbation, and prove an entertainment to YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS; if it can in any degree answer the dignity of the subject, and of the name under which I presume to shelter it; I have my best reward: particularly as it affords me an opportunity of declaring that I am, with the greatest zeal and respect,

SIR,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most obedient

And most devoted Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

ANCIENT AND MODERN

ITALY

COMPARED;

BEING THE FIRST PART OF

LIBERTY,

A POEM.

CONTENTS OF PART I.

THE following Poem is thrown into the form of a Poetical Vision. Its Scene the ruins of ancient *Rome*. The GODDESS of LIBERTY, who is supposed to speak through the whole, appears, characterized as BRITISH LIBERTY; to ver. 44. Gives a view of ancient *Italy*, and particularly of Republican *Rome*, in all her magnificence and glory; to ver. 112. This constrasted by modern *Italy*; its vallies, mountains, culture, cities, people: the difference appearing strongest in the Capital City *Rome*; to ver. 234. The ruins of the great works of LIBERTY more magnificent than the borrowed pomp of OPPRESSION; and from them revived *Sculpture*, *Painting*, and *Architecture*; to ver. 256. The old *Romans* apostrophiz'd, with regard to the several melancholy changes in ITALY: HORACE, TULLY, and VIRGIL, with regard to their *Tibur*, *Tusculum*, and *Naples*; to ver. 287. That once finest and most ornamented part of *Italy*, all along the Coast of *Baiæ*, how changed; to ver. 321. This desolation of *Italy* applied to *Britain*; to ver. 344. Address to the GODDESS of LIBERTY, that she would deduce from the first ages, her chief establishments, the description of which constitute the subject of the following parts of this Poem. She assents, and commands what she says to be sung in *Britain*; whose happiness, arising from freedom, and a limited monarchy, she marks; to ver. 391. An immediate VISION attends, and paints her words. Invocation.

LIBERTY.

PART I.

O My lamented TALBOT! while with thee
The *Muse* gay rov'd the glad *Hesperian* round,
And drew the inspiring breath of ancient arts;
Ah! little thought she her returning verse
Should sing our darling subject to thy Shade.
And does the mystic veil, from mortal beam,
Involve those eyes where every virtue smil'd,
And all thy FATHER's candid spirit shone?
The light of reason, pure, without a cloud;
Full of the generous heart, the mild regard;
Honour disdaining blemish, cordial faith,
And limpid truth, that looks the very soul,
But to the death of mighty nations turn,
My strain; be there absorpt the private tear.
Musing, I lay; warm from the sacred walks,
Where at each step imagination burns:
While scatter'd wide around, awful, and hoar,
Lies, a vast monument, once-glorious *Rome*,
The tomb of empire! ruins! that efface
Whate'er, of finish'd, modern pomp can boast.

Snatch'd by these wonders to that world where thought
Unfetter'd ranges, Fancy's magic hand
Led me anew o'er all the solemn scene,
Still in the mind's pure eye more solemn drest.
When straight, methought, the fair majestic POWER
Of LIBERTY appear'd. Not, as of old,
Extended in her hand the cap, and rod,
Whose slave-enlarging touch gave double life:
But her bright temples bound with *British* oak,
And naval honours nodded on her brow.
Sublime of port: loose o'er her shoulder flow'd
Her sea-green robe, with constellations gay.
An island-goddess now; and her high care
The Queen of Isles, the mistress of the main.
My heart beat filial transport at the sight;
And, as she mov'd to speak, th' awakened *Muse*
Listen'd intense. A while she look'd around,
With mournful eye the well-known ruins mark'd,
And then, her sighs repressing, thus began.
Mine are these wonders, all thou see'st is mine;
But ah how chang'd! the falling poor remains
Of what exalted once th' *Ausonian* shore.
Look back thro' time; and, rising from the gloom,
Mark the dread scene, that paints whate'er I say.
The great Republic see! that glow'd, sublime,
With the mixt freedom of a thousand states;
Rais'd on the thrones of Kings her *Curule Chair*,
And by her *Fasces* aw'd the subject world.
See busy millions quickning all the land,
With cities throng'd, and teeming culture high:
For *Nature* then smil'd on her free-born sons,
And pour'd the plenty that belongs to *Men*.
Behold, the country chearing, villas rise,
In lively prospect; by the secret lapse

Of brooks now lost and streams renown'd in song:
In *Umbria*'s closing vales, or on the brow
Of her brown hills that breathe the scented gale:
On *Baiæ*'s viny coast; where peaceful seas,
Fann'd by kind zephyrs, ever kiss the shore;
And suns unclouded shine, thro' purest air:
Or in the spacious neighbourhood of *Rome;*
Far-shining upward to the *Sabine* hills,
To *Anio*'s roar, and *Tibur*'s olive shade;
To where *Preneste* lifts her airy brow;
Or downward spreading to the sunny shore,
Where *Alba* breathes the freshness of the main.
  See distant mountains leave their valleys dry,
And o'er the proud Arcade the tribute pour,
To lave imperial *Rome*. For ages laid,
Deep, massy, firm, diverging every way,
With tombs of heroes sacred, see her roads:
By various nations trod, and suppliant kings;
With legions flaming, or with triumph gay.
  Full in the centre of these wondrous works,
The pride of earth! *Rome* in her glory see!
Behold her demigods, in senate met;
All head to counsel, and all heart to act:
The commonweal inspiring every tongue
With fervent eloquence, unbrib'd, and bold;
Ere tame Corruption taught the servile herd
To rank obedient to a master's voice.
  Her Forum see, warm, popular, and loud,
In trembling wonder hush'd, when the two SIRES*,
As they the private father greatly quell'd,
Stood up the public fathers of the state.
See Justice judging there in human shape.

* L. J. BRUTUS, and VIRGINIUS.

Hark! how with freedom's voice it thunders high,
Or in soft murmurs sinks to TULLY's tongue.
Her Tribes, her Census, see; her generous troops,
Whose pay was glory, and their best reward
Free for their country and for ME to die;
Ere mercenary murder grew a trade.
Mark, as the purple triumph waves along,
The highest pomp and lowest fall of life.
Her festive games, the school of heroes, see;
Her *Circus*, ardent with contending youth;
Her streets, her temples, palaces, and baths,
Full of fair forms, of Beauty's eldest born,
And of a people cast in virtue's mold,
While sculpture lives around, and *Asian* hills
Lend their best stores to heave the pillar'd dome:
All that to *Roman* strength the softer touch
Of *Grecian* art can join. But language fails
To paint this sun, this centre of mankind;
Where every virtue, glory, treasure, art,
Attracted strong, in heightened lustre met.
Need I the contrast mark? unjoyous view!
A land in all, in government, and arts,
In virtue, genius, earth and heaven, revers'd,
Who but these far-fam'd ruins to behold,
Proofs of a people, whose heroic aims
Soar'd far above the little selfish sphere
Of doubting modern life; who but inflam'd
With classic zeal, these consecrated scenes
Of men and deeds to trace: unhappy land,
Would trust thy wilds, and cities loose of sway?
Are these the vales, that, once, exulting states
In their warm bosom fed? The mountains these,
On whose high-blooming sides my sons, of old,
I bred to glory? These dejected towns,

Where, mean, and sordid, life can scarce subsist,
The scenes of ancient opulence, and pomp?
Come! by whatever sacred name disguis'd,
OPPRESSION, come! and in thy works rejoice!
See Nature's richest plains to putrid fens
Turn'd by thy fury. From their chearful bounds,
See raz'd th'enlivening village, farm, and seat.
First, rural toil, by thy rapacious hand
Robb'd of his poor reward, resign'd the plow;
And now he dares not turn the noxious glebe.
'Tis thine entire. The lonely swain himself,
Who loves at large along the grassy downs
His flocks to pasture, thy drear champain flies.
Far as the sickening eye can sweep around,
'Tis all one desart, desolate, and grey,
Graz'd by the sullen bufalo alone;
And where the rank uncultivated growth
Of rotting ages taints the passing gale.
Beneath the baleful blast the city pines,
Or sinks enfeebled, or infected burns.
Beneath it mourns the solitary road,
Roll'd in rude mazes o'er the abandon'd waste;
While ancient ways, ingulph'd, are seen no more.
Such thy dire plains, thou *self-destroyer!* Foe
To human-kind! Thy mountains too, profuse,
Where savage Nature blooms, seem their sad plaint
To raise against thy desolating rod.
There on the breezy brow, where thriving states,
And famous cities, once, to the pleas'd sun,
Far other scenes of rising culture spread,
Pale shine thy ragged towns. Neglected round,
Each harvest pines; the livid, lean produce
Of heartless labour: while thy hated joys,
Not proper pleasure, lift the lazy hand.

Better to sink in sloth the woes of life,
Than wake their rage with unavailing toil.
Hence drooping Art almost to Nature leaves
The rude unguided year. Thin wave the gifts
Of yellow *Ceres*, thin the radiant blush
Of orchard reddens in the warmest ray.
To weedy wildness run, no rural wealth
(Such as dictators fed) the garden pours.
Crude the wild olive flows, and foul the vine;
Nor juice *Cæcubian*, nor *Falernian*, more,
Streams life and joy, save in the *Muse*'s bowl.
Unseconded by art, the spinning race
Draw the bright thread in vain, and idly toil.
In vain, forlorn in wilds, the citron blows,
And flowering plants perfume the desart gale.
Thro' the vile thorn the tender myrtle twines.
Inglorious droops the laurel, dead to song,
And long a stranger to the hero's brow.
Nor half thy triumph this: cast, from brute fields,
Into the haunts of men thy ruthless eye.
There buxom Plenty never turns her horn;
The grace and virtue of exterior life,
No clean Convenience reigns; even Sleep itself,
Least delicate of powers, reluctant, there,
Lays on the bed impure his heavy head.
Thy horrid walk! dead, empty, unadorned,
See streets whose echoes never know the voice
Of chearful hurry, commerce many-tongu'd,
And art mechanic at his various task,
Fervent, employ'd. Mark the desponding race,
Of occupation void, as void of hope;
Hope, the glad ray, glanc'd from Eternal Good,
That life enlivens, and exalts its powers,
With views of fortune——madness all to them!

By thee relentless seiz'd their better joys,
To the soft aid of cordial airs they fly,
Breathing a kind oblivion o'er their woes,
And love and music melt their souls away.
From feeble Justice see how rash Revenge,
Trembling, the balance snatches; and the sword,
Fearful himself, to venal ruffians gives.
See where GOD'S altar, nursing murder, stands,
With the red touch of dark assassins stain'd.
But chief let *Rome*, the mighty city! speak
The full-exerted genius of thy reign.
Behold her rise amid the lifeless waste,
Expiring nature all corrupted round;
While the lone *Tyber*, thro' the desert plain,
Winds his waste stores, and sullen sweeps along.
Patch'd from my fragments, in unsolid pomp,
Mark how the temple glares; and, artful drest,
Amusive, draws the superstitious train.
Mark how the palace lifts a lying front,
Concealing often, in magnific jail,
Proud want; a deep unanimated gloom!
And oft adjoining to the drear abode
Of misery, whose melancholy walls
Seem its voracious grandeur to reproach.
Within the city bounds, the desart see.
See the rank vine o'er subterranean roofs,
Indecent, spread; beneath whose fretted gold
It once, exulting, flow'd. The people mark,
Matchless, while fir'd by me; to public good
Inexorably firm, just, generous, brave,
Afraid of nothing but unworthy life,
Elate with glory, an heroic soul
Known to the vulgar breast: behold them now
A thin despairing number, all-subdu'd,

The slaves of slaves, by superstition fool'd,
By vice unmann'd and a licentious rule,
In guile ingenious, and in murder brave.
Such in one land, beneath the same fair clime,
Thy sons, OPPRESSION, are; and such were MINE.
Even with thy labour'd Pomp, for whose vain show
Deluded thousands starve; all age-begrim'd,
Torn, robb'd and scatter'd in unnumber'd sacks,
And by the tempest of two thousand years
Continual shaken, let my Ruins vie.
These roads that yet the *Roman* hand assert,
Beyond the weak repair of modern toil;
These fractur'd arches, that the chiding stream
No more delighted hear; these rich remains
Of marbles now unknown, where shines imbib'd
Each parent ray; these massy columns, hew'd
From *Afric*'s farthest shore; one granite all,
These obelisks high-towering to the sky,
Mysterious mark'd with dark *Egyptian* lore;
These endless wonders that this *sacred way**
Illumine still, and consecrate to fame;
These fountains, vases, urns, and statues, charg'd
With the fine stores of art-compleating *Greece*.
Mine is, besides, *thy* every later boast:
Thy BUONAROTIS†, *thy* PALLADIOS† *mine*;
And *mine* the fair designs, which RAPHAEL's† soul
O'er the live canvass, emanating, breath'd.
What would you say, ye conquerors of earth!
Ye *Romans!* could you raise the laurel'd head;
Could you the country see, by seas of blood,

* *Via Sacra.*

† M. ANGELO BUONAROTI, PALLADIO, and RAPHAEL D'URBINO; the three great modern masters in ſculpture, architecture, and painting.

And the dread toil of ages, won ſo dear;
Your pride, your triumph, your ſupreme delight!
For whoſe defence oft, in the doubtful hour,
You rush'd with rapture down the gulph of fate,
Of death ambitious! till by awful deeds,
Virtues, and courage, that amaze mankind,
The queen of nations rose; poſſeſt of all
Which nature, art, and glory could beſtow:
What would you say, deep in the last abyss
Of slavery, vice, and unambitious want,
Thus to behold her sunk? Your crowded plains,
Void of their cities; unadorn'd your hills;
Ungrac'd your lakes; your ports to ships unknown;
Your lawless floods, and your abandon'd streams:
These could you know? these could you love again?
Thy *Tibur*, HORACE, could it now inspire
Content, poetic ease, and rural joy,
Soon bursting into song: while thro' the groves
Of headlong *Anio*, dashing to the vale,
In many a tortur'd stream, you mus'd along?
Yon wild retreat *, where superstition dreams,
Could, TULLY, you your *Tusculum* believe?
And could you deem yon naked hills, that form,
Fam'd in old song, the ship-forsaken bay †,
Your *Formian* shore? once the delight of earth,
Where art and nature, ever-smiling, join'd
On the gay land to lavish all their stores.
How chang'd, how vacant, VIRGIL, wide around,
Would now your *Naples* seem? Disaster'd less
By black *Vesuvius* thundering o'er the coast,

* *Tusculum* is reckoned to have stood at a place now called *Grotta Ferrata*, a convent of monks.

† The bay of *Mola* (anciently *Formiæ*) into which HOMER brings ULYSSES, and his companions. Near *Formiæ* CICERO had a villa.

His midnight earthquakes, and his mining fires,
Than by despotic rage*: *that* inward gnaws,
A nativè foe; a *foreign*, tears without.
First from your flatter'd CÆSARS this began:
Till, doom'd to tyrants an eternal prey,
Thin-peopled spreads, at last, the syren plain†,
That the dire soul of HANNIBAL disarm'd;
And wrapt in weeds the shore of *Venus*‡ lies.
There *Baiæ* sees no more the joyous throng;
Her bank all beaming with the pride of *Rome*:
No generous vines now bask along the hills,
Where sport the breezes of the *Tyrrhene* main:
With baths and temples mixt, no villas rise;
Nor, art-sustain'd amid reluctant waves,
Draw the cool murmurs of the breathing deep:
No spreading ports their sacred arms extend:
No mighty moles the big intrusive storm,
From the calm station, roll resounding back.
An almost total desolation sits,
A dreary stillness, saddening o'er the coast;
Where, when soft suns and tepid winters rose,
Rejoicing crowds inhal'd the balm of peace;
Where city'd hill to hill reflected blaze;
And where, with *Ceres*, *Bacchus* wont to hold
A genial strife||. Her youthful form, robust,
Even nature yields; by fire, and earthquake rent:
Whole stately cities in the dark abrupt
Swallow'd at once, or vile in rubbish laid,

* *Naples* then under the *Austrian* government.

† *Campagna felice*, adjoining to *Capua*.

‡ The coast of *Baiæ*, which was formerly adorned with the works mentioned in the following lines; and where, amidst many magnificent ruins, those of a temple erected to *Venus* are still to be seen.

|| All along this coast, the ancient *Romans* had their winter retreats; and several populous cities stood.

A nest for serpents; from the red abyss
New hills, explosive, thrown; the *Lucrine* lake
A reedy pool; and all to *Cuma*'s point,
The sea recovering his usurp'd domain,
And pour'd triumphant o'er the bury'd dome.
  Hence, BRITAIN, learn; my best-establish'd, last,
And more than GREECE, or ROME, my steady reign;
The land where, King and People equal bound
By guardian laws, my fullest blessings flow;
And where my jealous unsubmitting soul,
The dread of tyrants! burns in every breast:
Learn hence, if such the miserable fate
Of an heroic race, the masters once
Of human-kind; what, when depriv'd of ME,
How grievous must be thine? In spite of climes,
Whose sun-enliven'd æther wakes the soul
To higher powers; in spite of happy soils,
That, but by labour's slightest aid impell'd,
With treasures teem to thy cold clime unknown;
If there desponding fail the common arts,
And sustenance of life: could life itself,
Far less a thoughtless tyrant's hollow pomp,
Subsist with thee? Against depressing skies,
Join'd to full-spread Oppression's cloudy brow,
How could thy spirits hold? where vigour find,
Forc'd fruits to tear from their unnative soil?
Or, storing every harvest in thy ports,
To plow the dreadful all-producing wave?
  Here paus'd the GODDESS. By the pause assur'd,
In trembling accents thus I mov'd my prayer.
" Oh first, and most benevolent of powers!
" Come from eternal splendors, here on earth,
" Against despotic pride, and rage, and lust,
" To shield mankind; to raise them to assert

" The native rights and honour of their race:
" Teach me thy lowest subject, but in zeal
" Yielding to none, the PROGRESS OF THY REIGN,
" And with a strain from THEE enrich the *Muse*.
" As THEE alone she serves, her patron, THOU,
" And great inspirer be! then will she joy,
" Thro' narrow life her lot, and private shade:
" And when her venal voice she barters vile,
" Or to thy open or thy secret foes,
" May ne'er those sacred raptures touch her more,
" By slavish hearts unfelt! and may her song
" Sink in oblivion with the nameless crew!
" Vermin of state! to thy o'erflowing light
" That owe their being, yet betray thy cause."

Then, condescending kind, the HEAVENLY POWER Return'd.——" What here, suggested by the scene,
" I slight unfold, record and sing at home,
" In that blest isle, where (so we spirits move)
" With one quick effort of my will I am.
" There TRUTH, unlicens'd, walks; and dares accost
" Even kings themselves, the monarchs of the free!
" Fix'd on my rock, there, an indulgent race
" O'er BRITONS wield the sceptre of their choice:
" And there, to finish what his sires began,
" A PRINCE behold! for ME who burns sincere,
" Ev'n with a subject's zeal. He my great work
" Will parent-like sustain; and added give
" The touch, the Graces and the Muses owe.
" For BRITAIN's glory swells his panting breast;
" And ancient arts he emulous revolves:
" His pride to let the smiling heart abroad;
" Thro' clouds of pomp, that but conceal the man;
" To please his pleasure; bounty his delight;
" And all the soul of TITUS dwells in him."

Hail glorious theme! But how, alas! shall verse,
From the crude stores of mortal language drawn,
How faint and tedious, sing, what piercing deep,
The GODDESS flash'd at once upon my soul?
For, clear precision all, the tongue of gods
Is harmony itself; to every ear
Familiar known, like light to every eye.
Mean-time disclosing ages, as she spoke,
In long succession pour'd their empires forth;
Scene after scene, the human drama spread;
And still th' embodied picture rose to sight.
Oh THOU! to whom the *Muses* owe their flame;
Who bid'st, beneath the pole, *Parnassus* rise,
And *Hippocrenè* flow; with thy bold ease,
The striking force, the lightning of thy thought,
And thy strong phrase, that rolls profound, and clear;
Oh gracious GODDESS! re-inspire my song;
While I, to nobler than poetic fame
Aspiring, thy commands to BRITONS bear.

GREECE:

BEING THE SECOND PART OF

LIBERTY,

A POEM.

CONTENTS OF PART II.

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LIBERTY.

PART II.

THUS spoke the GODDESS of the fearless eye;
And at her voice, renew'd, the VISION rose.
  First, in the dawn of time, with eastern swains,
In woods, and tents, and cottages, I liv'd;
While on from plain to plain they led their flocks,
In search of clearer spring, and fresher field.
These, as increasing families disclos'd
The tender state, I taught an equal sway.
Few were offences, properties, and laws.
Beneath the rural portal, palm-o'erspread,
The father-senate met. There Justice dealt,
With reason then and equity the same,
Free as the common air, her prompt decree;
Nor yet had stain'd her sword with subject's blood.
The simpler arts were all their simple wants
Had urg'd to light. But instant, these supply'd,
Another set of fonder wants arose,
And other arts with them of finer aim;
Till, from refining want to want impell'd,
The mind by thinking push'd her latent powers,
And life began to glow, and arts to shine.

At first, on brutes alone the rustic war
Launch'd the rude spear; swift, as he glar'd along,
On the grim lion, or the robber-wolf.
For then young sportive life was void of toil,
Demanding little, and with little pleas'd:
But when to manhood grown, and endless joys,
Led on by equal toils, the bosom fir'd;
Lewd lazy rapine broke primæval peace,
And, hid in caves and idle forests drear,
From the lone pilgrim and the wandering swain,
Seiz'd what he durst not earn. Then brother's blood
First, horrid, smok'd on the polluted skies.
Awful in justice, then the burning youth,
Led by their temper'd sires, on lawless men,
The last worst monsters of the shaggy wood,
Turn'd the keen arrow, and the sharpen'd spear.
Then war grew glorious. Heroes then arose;
Who, scorning coward self, for others liv'd,
Toil'd for their ease, and for their safety bled.
West with the living day to GREECE I came:
Earth smil'd beneath my beam: the *Muse* before
Sonorous flew, that low till then in woods
Had tun'd the reed, and sigh'd the shepherd's pain;
But now, to sing heroic deeds, she swell'd
A nobler note, and bade the banquet burn.
For GREECE my sons of EGYPT I forsook;
A boastful race, that in the vain abyss
Of fabling ages lov'd to lose their source,
And with their river trac'd it from the skies.
While there my laws alone despotic reign'd,
And king, as well as people, proud obey'd;
I taught them science, virtue, wisdom, arts;
By poets, sages, legislators sought;
The school of polish'd life, and human-kind.

But when mysterious Superstition came,
And, with her Civil Sister * leagu'd, involv'd
In study'd darkness the desponding mind;
Then Tyrant Power the righteous scourge unloos'd:
For yielding reason speaks the soul a slave.
Instead of useful works, like Nature's, great,
Enormous, cruel wonders crush'd the land;
And round a tyrant's tomb†, who none deserv'd,
For one vile carcass perish'd countless lives.
Then the great Dragon‡, couch'd amid his floods,
Swell'd his fierce heart, and cry'd—"This flood is mine,
"'Tis I that bid it flow."—But, undeceiv'd,
His phrenzy soon the proud blasphemer felt;
Felt that, without my fertilizing power,
Suns lost their force, and *Niles* o'erflow'd in vain.
Nought could retard me: nor the frugal state
Of rising *Persia*, sober in extreme,
Beyond the pitch of man, and thence revers'd
Into luxurious waste: nor yet the ports
Of old PHOENICIA; first for letters fam'd,
That paint the voice, and silent speak to sight,
Of arts prime source, and guardian! by fair stars,
First tempted out into the lonely deep;
To whom I first disclos'd mechanic arts,
The winds to conquer, to subdue the waves,
With all the peaceful power of ruling trade;
Earnest of BRITAIN. Nor by these retain'd;
Nor by the neighbouring land, whose palmy shore
The silver *Jordan* laves. Before me lay
The promis'd LAND OF ARTS, and urg'd my flight.
Hail Nature's utmost boast! unrival'd GREECE!
My fairest reign! where every power benign

* Civil Tyranny. † The Pyramids. ‡ The Tyrants of EGYPT.

Conspir'd to blow the flower of human-kind,
And lavish'd all that genius can inspire.
Clear sunny climates, by the breezy main,
Iönian or *Ægean*, temper'd kind.
Light, airy soils. A country rich, and gay;
Broke into hills with balmy odours crown'd,
And, bright with purple harvest, joyous vales.
Mountains and streams, where verse spontaneous flow'd;
Whence deem'd by wondering men the seat of gods,
And still the mountains and the streams of song.
All that boon Nature could luxuriant pour
Of high materials, and MY restless ARTS
Frame into finish'd life. How many states,
And clustering towns, and monuments of fame,
And scenes of glorious deeds, in little bounds!
From the rough tract of bending mountains, beat
By *Adria*'s here, there by *Ægean* waves;
To where the deep-adorning *Cyclade Isles*
In shining prospect rise, and on the shore
Of farthest *Crete* resounds the *Lybian* main.
O'er All two rival cities rear'd the brow,
And balanc'd all. Spread on *Eurotas*' bank,
Amid a circle of soft-rising hills,
The patient SPARTA One: the sober, hard,
And man-subduing city; which no shape
Of Pain could conquer, nor of Pleasure charm.
LYCURGUS there built, on the solid base
Of equal life, so well a temper'd state;
Where mix'd each government, in such just poise;
Each power so checking, and supporting, each;
That firm for ages, and unmov'd, it stood,
The fort of GREECE! without one giddy hour,
One shock of faction, or of party-rage.
For, drain'd the springs of wealth, Corruption there

Lay withered at the root. Thrice happy land!
Had not neglected Art, with weedy vice
Confounded, sunk. But if *Athenian* arts
Lov'd not the soil; yet there the calm abode
Of wisdom, virtue, philosophic ease,
Of manly sense and wit, in frugal phrase
Confin'd, and press'd into *Laconic* force.
There too, by rooting thence still treacherous self,
The Public and the Private grew the same.
The children of the nursing Public all,
And at its table fed, for that they toil'd,
For that they liv'd entire, and even for that
The tender mother urg'd her son to die.
Of softer genius, but not less intent
To seize the palm of empire, ATHENS rose.
Where, with bright marbles big and future pomp,
Hymettus * spread, amid the scented sky,
His thymy treasures to the labouring bee,
And to botanic hand the stores of health;
Wrapt in a soul-attenuating clime,
Between *Ilissus* and *Cephissus* † glow'd
This hive of science, shedding sweets divine,
Of active arts, and animated arms.
There, passionate for ME, an easy-mov'd,
A quick, refin'd, a delicate, humane,
Enlightened people reign'd. Oft on the brink
Of ruin, hurry'd by the charm of speech,
Inforcing hasty counsel immature,
Totter'd the rash Democracy; unpois'd,
And by the rage devour'd, that ever tears
A populace unequal; part too rich,

* A mountain near *Athens*.

† Two rivers, betwixt which *Athens* was situated.

And part or fierce with want or abject grown.
SOLON, at last, their mild restorer, rose:
Allay'd the tempest; to the calm of laws
Reduc'd the settling whole; and, with the weight
Which the two senates* to the public lent,
As with an anchor fix'd the driving state.
Nor was my forming care to These confin'd.
For emulation thro' the Whole I pour'd,
Noble contention! who should most excel
In government well-pois'd, adjusted best
To public weal: in countries cultur'd high:
In ornamented towns, where order reigns,
Free social life, and polish'd manners fair:
In exercise, and arms; arms only drawn
For common GREECE, to quell the *Persian* pride:
In moral science, and in graceful arts.
Hence, as for glory peacefully they strove,
The prize grew greater, and the prize of all.
By contest brighten'd, hence the radiant youth
Pour'd every beam; by generous pride inflam'd,
Felt every ardor burn: their great reward
The verdant wreathe, which sounding *Pisa*† gave.
Hence flourish'd GREECE; and hence a race of men,
As gods by conscience future times ador'd:
In whom each virtue wore a smiling air,
Each science shed o'er life a friendly light,
Each art was nature. SPARTAN valour hence,
At the *fam'd pass*‡ firm as an isthmus stood;

* The *Areopagus*, or Supreme Court of Judicature, which SOLON reformed, and improved: and the Council of *Four Hundred*, by him instituted. In this council all affairs of state were deliberated, before they came to be voted in the assembly of the people.

† Or *Olympia*, the city where the *Olympic* games were celebrated.

‡ The Straits of *Thermopylæ*.

And the whole eastern ocean, waving far
As eye could dart it's vision, nobly check'd.
While in extended battle, at the field
Of *Marathon*, my keen ATHENIANS drove
Before their ardent band an host of slaves.
  Hence thro' the continent ten thousand GREEKS
Urg'd a retreat, whose glory not the prime
Of victories can reach. Desarts, in vain,
Oppos'd their course; and hostile lands, unknown;
And deep rapacious floods, dire-bank'd with death;
And mountains, in whose jaws destruction grin'd
Hunger, and toil; *Armenian* snows, and storms;
And circling myriads still of barbarous foes.
GREECE in their view, and glory yet untouch'd,
Their steady column pierc'd the scattering herds,
Which a whole empire pour'd; and held its way
Triumphant, by the SAGE-EXALTED CHIEF *
Fir'd and sustain'd. Oh light and force of mind,
Almost almighty in severe extremes!
The sea at last from *Colchian* mountains seen,
Kind-hearted transport round their captains threw
The soldier's fond embrace; o'erflow'd their eyes
With tender floods, and loos'd the general voice
To cries resounding loud—*The sea! The sea!*
  In ATTIC bounds hence heroes, sages, wits,
Shone thick as stars, the milky way of GREECE!
And tho' gay wit, and pleasing grace was theirs,
All the soft modes of elegance and ease;
Yet was not courage less, the patient touch
Of toiling art, and disquisition deep.
  My SPIRIT pours a vigour thro' the soul,
Th' unfetter'd thought with energy inspires,

* XENOPHON.

Invincible in arts, in the bright field
Of nobler Science, as in that of Arms.
ATHENIANS thus not less intrepid burst
The bonds of tyrant darkness, than they spurn'd
The *Persian* chains: while thro' the city, full
Of mirthful quarrel and of witty war,
Incessant struggled taste refining taste,
And friendly free discussion, calling forth
From the fair jewel TRUTH its latent ray.
O'er All shone out the great ATHENIAN SAGE *,
And Father of Philosophy: the sun,
From whose white blaze emerg'd each various sect
Took various teints, but with diminish'd beam.
Tutor of ATHENS! he, in every street,
Dealt priceless treasure: goodness his delight,
Wisdom his wealth, and glory his reward.
Deep thro' the human heart, with playful art,
His simple question stole; as into truth,
And serious deeds, he smil'd the laughing race;
Taught moral happy life, whate'er can bless,
Or grace mankind; and what he taught he was.
Compounded high, tho' plain, his doctrine broke
In different SCHOOLS. The bold poetic phrase
Of figur'd PLATO; XENOPHON'S pure strain,
Like the clear brook that steals along the vale;
Dissecting truth, the STAGYRITE'S keen eye;
Th' exalted STOIC pride; the CYNIC sneer;
The slow-consenting ACADEMIC doubt;
And, joining bliss to virtue, the glad ease
Of EPICURUS, seldom understood.
They, ever-candid, reason still oppos'd
To reason; and, since virtue was their aim,

* SOCRATES.

Each by sure practice try'd to prove his way
The best. Then stood untouch'd the solid base
Of Liberty, the Liberty of Mind:
For systems yet, and soul-enslaving creeds,
Slept with the monsters of succeeding times.
From priestly darkness sprung th' enlightening arts
Of fire, and sword, and rage, and horrid names.
O GREECE! thou sapient nurse of FINER ARTS!
Which to bright science blooming fancy bore,
Be this thy praise, that Thou, and Thou alone,
In these hast led the way, in these excell'd,
Crown'd with the laurel of assenting Time.
In thy full language, speaking mighty things;
Like a clear torrent close, or else diffus'd
A broad majestic stream, and rowling on
Thro' all the winding harmony of sound:
In it the power of ELOQUENCE, at large,
Breath'd the persuasive or pathetic soul;
Still'd by degrees the democratic storm,
Or bade it threatning rise, and tyrants shook,
Flush'd at the head of their victorious troops.
In it the MUSE, her fury never quench'd,
By mean unyielding phrase, or jarring sound,
Her unconfin'd divinity display'd;
And, still harmonious, form'd it to her will:
Or soft depress'd it to the shepherd's moan,
Or rais'd it swelling to the tongue of Gods.
Heroic Song was thine; the FOUNTAIN-BARD *,
Whence each poetic stream derives its course.
Thine the dread *Moral Scene*, thy chief delight!
Where idle Fancy durst not mix her voice,
When Reason spoke august; the fervent heart

* HOMER.

Or plain'd, or storm'd; and in th' impassion'd man,
Concealing art with art, the poet sunk.
This potent school of manners, but when left
To loose neglect, a land-corrupting plague,
Was not unworthy deem'd of public care,
And boundless cost, by thee; whose every son,
Even last mechanic, the true taste possess'd
Of what had flavour to the nourish'd soul.
The sweet enforcer of the poet's strain,
Thine was the meaning MUSIC of the heart.
Not the vain trill, that, void of passion, runs
In giddy mazes, tickling idle ears;
But that deep-searching voice, and artful hand,
To which respondent shakes the varied soul.
Thy fair ideas, thy delightful forms,
By Love imagin'd, by the Graces touch'd,
The boast of well-pleas'd *Nature!* SCULPTURE seiz'd,
And bade them ever smile in *Parian* stone.
Selecting Beauty's choice, and that again
Exalting, blending in a perfect whole,
Thy workmen left even Nature's self behind.
From those far different, whose prolific hand
Peoples a nation; they for years on years,
By the cool touches of judicious toil,
Their rapid genius curbing, pour'd it all
Thro' the live features of one breathing stone.
There, beaming full, it shone; expressing Gods:
Jove's awful brow, *Apollo*'s air divine,
The fierce atrocious frown of sinewed *Mars*,
Or the sly graces of the *Cyprian Queen*.
Minutely perfect all! Each dimple sunk,
And every muscle swell'd, as Nature taught.
In tresses, braided gay, the marble wav'd;
Flow'd in loose robes, or thin transparent veils;

Sprung into motion; softened into flesh;
Was fir'd to Passion, or refin'd to Soul.
Nor less thy PENCIL, with creative touch,
Shed mimic life, when all thy brightest dames,
Assembled, ZEUXIS in his HELEN mix'd.
And when APELLES, who peculiar knew
To give a grace that more than mortal smil'd,
The Soul of Beauty! call'd the Queen of Love,
Fresh from the billows, blushing orient charms.
Even such enchantment then thy pencil pour'd,
That cruel-thoughted War th' impatient torch
Dash'd to the ground; and, rather than destroy
The patriot picture*, let the city 'scape.
First elder *Sculpture* taught her *Sister Art*
Correct design; where great ideas shone,
And in the secret trace expression spoke:
Taught her the graceful attitude; the turn,
And beauteous airs of head; the native act,
Or bold, or easy; and, cast free behind,
The swelling mantle's well-adjusted flow.
Then the bright *Muse*, their eldest Sister, came;
And bade her follow where she led the way:
Bade earth, and sea, and air, in colours rise;
And copious action on the canvass glow;
Gave her gay Fable; spread Invention's store;
Inlarg'd her View; taught Composition high,
And just Arrangement, circling round one point,
That starts to sight, binds and commands the whole.
Caught from the heavenly *Muse* a nobler aim,

* When DEMETRIUS besieged *Rhodes*, and could have reduced the city, by setting fire to that quarter of it, where stood the house of the celebrated PROTOGENES; he chose rather to raise the siege, than hazard the burning of a famous picture called JASYLUS, the master-piece of that painter.

And scorning the soft trade of mere delight,
O'er all thy temples, porticos, and schools,
Heroic deeds she trac'd, and warm display'd
Each moral beauty to the ravish'd eye.
There, as th' imagin'd presence of the God
Arous'd the mind, or vacant hours induc'd
Calm Contemplation, or assembled youth
Burn'd in ambitious circle round the sage,
The living lesson stole into the heart,
With more prevailing force than dwells in words.
These rouse to glory; while, to rural life,
The softer canvass oft repos'd the soul.
There gayly broke the sun-illumin'd cloud;
The less'ning prospect, and the mountain blue,
Vanish'd in air; the precipice frown'd, dire;
White, down the rock, the rushing torrent dash'd;
The sun shone, trembling, o'er the distant main;
The tempest foam'd, immense; the driving storm
Sadden'd the skies, and, from the doubling gloom,
On the scath'd oak the ragged lightning fell;
In closing shades, and where the current strays,
With Peace, and Love, and Innocence around,
Pip'd the lone shepherd to his feeding flock:
Round happy parents smil'd their younger selves;
And friends convers'd, by death divided long.
To public Virtue thus the smiling Arts,
Unblemish'd handmaids, serv'd; the *Graces* they
To dress this fairest *Venus*. Thus rever'd,
And plac'd beyond the reach of sordid Care,
The high awarders of immortal fame,
Alone for glory thy great masters strove;
Courted by kings, and by contending states
Assum'd the boasted honour of their birth.

In ARCHITECTURE too thy rank supreme!
That art where most magnificent appears
The little builder man; by thee refin'd,
And, smiling high, to full perfection brought.
Such thy sure rules, that *Goths* of every age,
Who scorn'd their aid, have only loaded earth
With labour'd heavy monuments of shame.
Not those gay domes that o'er thy splendid shore
Shot, all proportion, up. First unadorn'd,
And nobly plain, the manly *Doric* rose;
Th' *Ionic* then, with decent matron grace,
Her airy pillar heav'd; luxuriant last,
The rich *Corinthian* spread her wanton wreath.
The whole so measur'd true, so lessen'd off
By fine proportion, that the marble pile,
Form'd to repel the still or stormy waste
Of rolling ages, light as fabrics look'd
That from the magic wand aërial rise.
These were the wonders that illumin'd GREECE,
From end to end——Here interrupting warm,
Where are they now? (I cry'd) say, GODDESS, where?
And what the land thy darling thus of old?
Sunk! she resum'd; deep in the kindred gloom
Of Superstition, and of Slavery, sunk!
No glory now can touch their hearts, benumb'd
By loose dejected sloth and servile fear;
No science pierce the darkness of their minds;
No nobler art the quick ambitious soul
Of imitation in their breast awake.
Even, to supply the needful arts of life,
Mechanic toil denies the hopeless hand.
Scarce any trace remaining, vestige grey,
Or nodding column on the desart shore,
To point where *Corinth*, or where *Athens* stood.

A faithless land of violence, and death!
Where Commerce parleys, dubious, on the shore;
And his wild impulse curious search restrains,
Afraid to trust th' inhospitable clime.
Neglected Nature fails; in sordid want
Sunk, and debas'd, their beauty beams no more.
The Sun himself seems, angry, to regard,
Of light unworthy, the degenerate race;
And fires them oft with pestilential rays:
While Earth, blue poison steaming on the skies,
Indignant, shakes them from her troubled sides.
But as from man to man, Fate's first decree,
Impartial Death the tide of riches rolls,
So states must die and LIBERTY go round.

Fierce was the stand, ere Virtue, Valour, Arts,
And the Soul fir'd by ME (that often, stung
With thoughts of better times and old renown,
From hydra-tyrants try'd to clear the land),
Lay quite extinct in GREECE, their works effac'd
And gross o'er all unfeeling bondage spread.
Sooner I mov'd my much-reluctant flight,
Pois'd on the doubtful wing: when GREECE with GREECE
Embroil'd in foul contention fought no more
For common glory, and for common weal:
But false to Freedom, sought to quell the Free;
Broke the firm band of Peace, and sacred Love,
That lent the whole irrefragable force;
And, as around the partial trophy blush'd,
Prepar'd the way for total overthrow.
Then to the *Persian* power, whose pride they scorn'd,
When XERXES pour'd his millions o'er the land,
Sparta, by turns, and *Athens*, vilely su'd;
Su'd to be venal parricides, to spill
Their country's bravest blood, and on themselves

To turn their matchless mercenary arms.
Peaceful in *Susa*, then, sat the Great King *;
And by the trick of treaties, the still waste
Of sly corruption, and barbaric gold,
Effected what his steel could ne'er perform.
Profuse he gave them the luxurious draught,
Inflaming all the land: unbalanc'd wide
Their tottering states; their wild assemblies rul'd,
As the winds turn at every blast the seas:
And by their listed orators, whose breath
Still with a factious storm infested GREECE,
Rous'd them to civil war, or dash'd them down
To sordid peace—† Peace! that, when *Sparta* shook
Astonish'd ARTAXERXES on his throne,
Gave up, fair-spread o'er *Asia*'s sunny shore,
Their kindred cities to perpetual chains.
What could so base, so infamous a thought
In *Spartan* hearts inspire? Jealous, they saw
Respiring *Athens* ‡ rear again her walls;
And the pale fury fir'd them, once again
To crush this rival city to the dust.
For now no more the noble social soul
Of LIBERTY my Families combin'd;
But by short views, and selfish passions, broke,
Dire as when friends are rankled into foes,
They mix'd severe, and wag'd eternal war:
Nor felt they, furious, their exhausted force;
Nor, with false glory, discord, madness blind,

* So the kings of *Persia* were called by the *Greeks*.

† The peace made by ANTALCIDAS, the *Lacedemonian* admiral, with the *Persians*; by which the *Lacedemonians* abandoned all the *Greeks* established in the Lesser *Asia* to the dominion of the king of *Persia*.

‡ *Athens* had been dismantled by the *Lacedemonians*, at the end of the first *Peloponnesian* war, and was at this time restored by CONON to its former splendor.

Saw how the blackening storm from *Thracia* came.
Long years roll'd on, by many a battle stain'd *,
The blush and boast of Fame! where courage, art,
And military glory shone supreme:
But let detesting ages, from the scene
Of GREECE self-mangled, turn the sickening eye.
At last, when, bleeding from a thousand wounds,
She felt her spirits fail; and in the dust
Her latest heroes, NICIAS, CONON, lay,
AGESILAUS, and the THEBAN FRIENDS †:
The *Macedonian* vulture mark'd his time,
By the dire scent of *Cheronæa* ‡ lur'd,
And, fierce-descending, seiz'd his hapless prey.
  Thus tame submitted to the victor's yoke
GREECE, once the gay, the turbulent, the bold;
For every grace, and muse, and science born;
With arts of War, of Government, elate;
To Tyrants dreadful, dreadful to the Best;
Whom I MYSELF could scarcely rule: and thus
The *Persian* fetters, that inthrall'd the mind,
Were turn'd to formal and apparent chains.
  Unless CORRUPTION first deject the pride,
And guardian vigour of the free-born soul,
All crude attempts of *Violence* are vain;
For firm within, and while at heart untouch'd,
Ne'er yet by *Force* was *Freedom* overcome.
But soon as INDEPENDENCE stoops the head,
To *Vice* enslav'd, and *Vice-created Wants*;
Then to some *foul corrupting Hand*, whose waste
These heighten'd wants with fatal bounty feeds:
From man to man the slackening ruin runs,
Till the whole State unnerv'd in SLAVERY sinks.

* The *Peloponnesian* war. † PELOPIDAS, and EPAMINONDAS.

‡ The battle of *Cheronæa*, in which PHILIP of *Macedon* utterly defeated the *Greeks*.

ROME:

BEING THE THIRD PART OF

LIBERTY,

A POEM.

CONTENTS OF PART III.

AS this *Part* contains a description of the establishment of LIBERTY in *Rome*, it begins with a view of the *Grecian* colonies settled in the southern parts of *Italy*, which with *Sicily* constituted the *Great Greece* of the Ancients. With these colonies the *Spirit* of LIBERTY, and of *Republics*, spreads over *Italy*; to ver. 32. Transition to PYTHAGORAS and his philosophy, which he taught through those free states and cities; to ver. 71. Amidst the many small *Republics* in *Italy*, ROME the destined seat of LIBERTY. Her establishment there dated from the expulsion of the *Tarquins*. How differing from that in GREECE; to ver. 88. Reference to a view of the ROMAN REPUBLIC given in the *First Part* of this *Poem;* to mark its *Rise* and *Fall* the peculiar purport of *This*. During its first ages, the greatest force of LIBERTY, and *Virtue*, exerted; to ver. 103. The source whence derived the *Heroic Virtues* of the ROMANS. Enumeration of these *Virtues*. Thence their security at home; their glory, success, and empire, abroad; to ver. 226. Bounds of the Roman empire geographically described; to ver. 257. The states of GREECE restored to LIBERTY, by TITUS QUINTUS FLAMINIUS, the highest instance of public generosity and beneficence; to ver. 328. The loss of LIBERTY in ROME. Its causes, progress, and completion in the death of BRUTUS; to ver. 485. ROME under the Emperors; to ver. 513. From ROME the GODDESS of LIBERTY goes among the NORTHERN NATIONS; where, by infusing into them her *Spirit* and general principles, SHE lays the groundwork of her future establishments; sends them in vengeance on the *Roman* empire, now totally enslaved; and then, with *Arts* and *Sciences* in her train, quits earth during the *dark ages;* to ver. 550. The celestial regions, to which LIBERTY retired, not proper to be opened to the view of mortals.

LIBERTY.

PART III.

HERE melting mix'd with air th' ideal forms,
That painted still whate'er the GODDESS sung.
Then I, impatient.—" From extinguish'd GREECE,
" To what new region stream'd the Human Day?"
She softly sighing, as when *Zephir* leaves,
Resign'd to *Boreas*, the declining year,
Resum'd.——Indignant, these last scenes* I fled;
And long ere then, *Leucadia*'s cloudy cliff,
And the *Ceraunian* hills behind me thrown,
All LATIUM stood arous'd. Ages before,
Great mother of republics! GREECE had pour'd,
Swarm after swarm, her ardent youth around.
On *Asia*, *Afric*, *Sicily*, they stoop'd,
But chief on fair HESPERIA's winding shore;
Where, from *Lacinium*† to *Etrurian* vales,
They roll'd increasing colonies along,
And lent materials for my ROMAN REIGN.
With them *my Spirit* spread; and numerous states,
And cities rose, on *Grecian* models form'd;

* The last struggles of *Liberty* in GREECE.

† A promontory in *Calabria*.

As its parental policy, and arts,
Each had imbib'd. Besides, to each assign'd
A Guardian Genius, o'er the public weal,
Kept an unclosing eye; try'd to sustain,
Or more sublime, the soul infus'd by ME:
And strong the battle rose, with various wave,
Against the Tyrant Demons of the land.
Thus they their little wars and triumphs knew;
Their flows of fortune, and receding times,
But almost all below the proud regard
Of story vow'd to ROME, on deeds intent
That Truth beyond the flight of Fable bore.
Not so the SAMIAN SAGE *; to him belongs
The brightest witness of recording Fame.
For these free states his native isle† forsook,
And a vain tyrant's transitory smile,
He sought *Crotona*'s pure salubrious air,
And thro' Great *Greece*‡ his gentle wisdom taught;
Wisdom that calm'd for listening years§ the mind,
Nor ever heard amid the storm of zeal.
His mental eye first launch'd into the deeps
Of boundless æther; where unnumber'd orbs,
Myriads on myriads, thro' the pathless sky
Unerring roll, and wind their steady way.
There he the full consenting choir beheld;
There first discern'd the secret band of love,
The kind attraction, that to central suns
Binds circling earths, and world with world unites.
Instructed thence he great ideas form'd

* PYTHAGORAS.

† *Samos*, over which then reigned the tyrant POLYCRATES.

‡ The southern parts of *Italy* and *Sicily*, so called because of the *Grecian* colonies there settled.

§ His scholars were enjoined silence for five years.

Of the whole-moving, all-informing GOD,
The Sun of beings! beaming unconfin'd
Light, life, and love, and ever-active power:
Whom nought can image, and who best approves
The silent worship of the moral heart,
That joys in bounteous Heaven, and spreads the joy.
Nor scorn'd the soaring sage to stoop to life,
And bound his reason to the sphere of Man.
He gave the four yet reigning virtues * name;
Inspir'd the study of the finer arts,
That civiliz'd mankind, and laws devis'd
Where with enlighten'd justice mercy mix'd.
He even, into his tender system, took
Whatever shares the brotherhood of life:
He taught that life's indissoluble flame,
From brute to man, and man to brute again,
For ever shifting, runs th' eternal round;
Thence try'd against the blood-polluted meal,
And limbs yet quivering with some kindred soul,
To turn the human heart. Delightful truth!
Had he beheld the living chain ascend,
And not a circling Form but rising Whole.
  Amid these small republics one arose,
On yellow *Tyber*'s bank, almighty ROME,
Fated for ME. A nobler spirit warm'd
Her sons; and, rous'd by tyrants, nobler still
It burn'd in BRUTUS; the proud *Tarquins* chas'd
With all their crimes; bade radiant æras rise,
And the long honours of the Consul-Line.
  Here from the fairer, not the greater, plan
Of GREECE I vary'd; whose unmixing states,
By the keen soul of emulation pierc'd,

* The four cardinal virtues.

Long wag'd alone the bloodless war of arts,
And their *best* empire gain'd. But to diffuse
O'er *Men* an empire was my purpose now:
To let my martial Majesty abroad;
Into the vortex of one State to draw
The whole mix'd Force, and Liberty, on earth;
To conquer Tyrants, and set Nations free.
Already have I given, with flying touch,
A broken view of this my amplest reign.
Now, while its first, last, periods you survey,
Mark how it lab'ring rose, and rapid fell.
When ROME in noon-tide empire grasp'd the world,
And, soon as her resistless legions shone,
The nations stoop'd around; tho' then appear'd
Her grandeur most, yet in her dawn of power,
By many a jealous equal people press'd,
Then was the toil, the mighty struggle then;
Then for each *Roman* I an Hero told;
And every passing sun, and *Latian* scene,
Saw patriot virtues then, and awful deeds,
That or surpass the faith of modern times,
Or, if believ'd, with sacred horror strike.
For then, to prove my most exalted power,
I to the point of full perfection push'd,
To fondness and enthusiastic zeal,
The great, the reigning passion of the Free.
That godlike passion! which, the bounds of Self
Divinely bursting, the whole public takes
Into the heart, enlarg'd, and burning high
With the mixt ardor of unnumber'd Selves;
Of all who safe beneath the Voted Laws
Of the same parent state, fraternal, live.
From this kind Sun of Moral Nature flow'd
Virtues, that shine the light of human-kind,

And, ray'd thro' story, warm remotest time.
These Virtues too, reflected to their source,
Encreas'd its flame. The social charm went round,
The fair idea, more attractive still,
As more by Virtue mark'd; till *Romans*, all
One band of friends, unconquerable grew.

Hence, when their Country rais'd her plaintive voice,
The voice of pleading Nature was not heard;
And in their hearts the fathers throbb'd no more:
Stern to themselves, but gentle to the whole.
Hence sweetened Pain, the luxury of toil;
Patience, that baffled Fortune's utmost rage;
High-minded Hope, which at the lowest ebb,
When *Brennus* conquer'd, and when *Cannæ* bled,
The bravest impulse felt, and scorn'd despair.
Hence Moderation a new conquest gain'd;
As on the vanquish'd, like descending Heaven,
Their dewy mercy dropp'd, their bounty beam'd,
And by the labouring hand were crowns bestow'd.
Fruitful of men, hence hard laborious life,
Which no fatigue can quell, no season pierce.
Hence, INDEPENDANCE, with his Little pleas'd
Serene, and self-sufficient, like a God;
In whom CORRUPTION could not lodge one charm,
While he his honest Roots to Gold preferr'd;
While truly rich, and by his *Sabine* field,
The Man maintain'd, the *Roman*'s splendor all
Was in the public wealth and glory plac'd:
Or ready, a rough swain, to guide the plough;
Or else, the purple o'er his shoulder thrown,
In long majestic flow, to rule the state,
With Wisdom's purest eye; or, clad in steel,
To drive the steady battle on the foe.
Hence every passion, even the proudest, stoop'd,

To common-good: CAMILLUS, thy revenge;
Thy glory, FABIUS. All-submissive hence,
Consuls, Dictators, still resign'd their rule,
The very moment that the laws ordain'd.
Tho' Conquest o'er them clapp'd her eagle-wings,
Her laurels wreath'd, and yok'd her snowy steeds
To the triumphal car; soon as expir'd
The latest hour of sway, taught to submit,
(A harder lesson that than to command)
Into the Private *Roman* sunk the Chief.
If ROME was serv'd, and glorious, careless they
By whom. Their country's fame they deem'd their own;
And above envy, in a rival's train,
Sung the loud *Iös* by themselves deserv'd.
Hence matchless courage. On *Cremera*'s bank,
Hence fell the FABII; hence the DECII dy'd;
And CURTIUS plung'd into the flaming gulph.
Hence REGULUS the wavering fathers firm'd,
By dreadful counsel never given before;
For *Roman* honour su'd, and his own doom.
Hence he sustain'd to dare a death prepar'd
By *Punic* rage. On earth his manly look
Relentless fix'd, he from a last embrace,
By chains polluted, put his wife aside,
His little children climbing for a kiss;
Then dumb thro' rows of weeping wondering friends,
A new illustrious exile! press'd along.
Nor less impatient did he pierce the crowds
Opposing his return, than if, escap'd
From long litigious suits, he glad forsook
The noisy town a while and city cloud,
To breathe *Venafrian*, or *Tarentine* air.
Need I these high particulars recount?
The meanest bosom felt a thirst for fame;

Flight their worst death, and shame their only fear.
Life had no charms, nor any terrors fate,
When ROME and Glory call'd. But, in one view,
Mark the rare boast of these unequal'd times.
Ages revolv'd unsull'd by a crime:
Astrea reign'd, and scarcely needed laws
To bind a race elated with the pride
Of virtue, and disdaining to descend
To meanness, mutual violence, and wrongs.
While war around them rag'd, in happy ROME
All peaceful smil'd, all save the passing clouds
That often hang on Freedom's jealous brow;
And fair unblemish'd centuries elaps'd,
When not a *Roman* bled but in the field.
Their virtue such, that an unbalanc'd state,
Still between Noble and Plebeian tost,
As flow'd the wave of fluctuating power,
Was thence kept firm, and with triumphant prow
Rode out the storms. Oft tho' the native feuds,
That from the first their constitution shook,
(A latent ruin, growing as It grew)
Stood on the threatening point of civil war
Ready to rush: yet could the lenient voice
Of wisdom, soothing the tumultuous soul,
Those sons of virtue calm. Their generous hearts,
Unpetrify'd by Self, so naked lay
And sensible to Truth, that o'er the rage
Of giddy faction, by oppression swell'd,
Prevail'd a simple fable, and at once
To peace recover'd the divided state.
But if their often-cheated hopes refus'd
The soothing touch; still, in the love of ROME,
The dread Dictator found a sure resource.
Was she assaulted? was her glory stain'd?

One common quarrel wide inflam'd the whole.
Foes in the Forum in the Field were friends,
By social danger bound; each fond for each,
And for their dearest country all, to die.
Thus up the hill of empire slow they toil'd:
Till, the bold summit gain'd, the thousand states
Of proud ITALIA blended into one:
Then o'er the nations they resistless rush'd,
And touch'd the limits of the failing world.
Let Fancy's eye the distant lines unite.
See that which borders wild the western main,
Where storms at large resound, and tides immense:
From *Caledonia*'s dim cærulean coast,
And moist *Hibernia*, to where *Atlas*, lodg'd
Amid the restless clouds and leaning heaven,
Hangs o'er the deep that borrows thence its name.
Mark that oppos'd, where first the springing morn
Her roses sheds, and shakes around her dews:
From the dire desarts by the *Caspian* lav'd,
To where the *Tygris* and *Euphrates*, join'd,
Impetuous tear the *Babylonian* plain;
And blest *Arabia* aromatic breathes.
See that dividing far the watry north,
Parent of floods! from the majestic *Rhine*,
Drunk by *Batavian* meads, to where, seven-mouth'd,
In *Euxine* waves the flashing *Danube* roars;
To where the frozen *Tanais* scarcely stirs
The dead *Meotic* pool, or the long *Rha* *,
In the black *Scythian* sea † his torrent throws.
Last, that beneath the burning zone behold.
See where it runs, from the deep-loaded plains
Of *Mauritania* to the *Lybian* sands,

* The ancient name of the *Volga*.

† The *Caspian* sea.

Where *Ammon* lifts amid the torrid waste
A verdant isle with shade and fountain fresh;
And farther to the full *Egyptian* shore,
To where the *Nile* from *Ethiopian* clouds,
His never-drain'd ethereal urn, descends.
In this vast space what various tongues, and states!
What bounding rocks, and mountains, floods, and seas!
What purple tyrants quell'd, and nations free'd!
O'er GREECE descended chief, with stealth divine,
The *Roman* bounty in a flood of day:
As at her *Isthmian* games, a fading pomp!
Her full-assembled youth innumerous swarm'd.
On a tribunal rais'd FLAMINIUS sat;
A victor he, from the deep phalanx pierc'd
Of iron-coated *Macedon*, and back
The *Grecian* tyrant* to his bounds repell'd.
In the high thoughtless gaiety of game,
While sport alone their unambitious hearts
Possess'd; the sudden trumpet, sounding hoarse,
Bade silence o'er the bright assembly reign.
Then thus a herald.——"To the states of GREECE
"The ROMAN PEOPLE, unconfin'd, restore
"Their countries, cities, liberties, and laws:
"Taxes remit, and garrisons withdraw."
The crowd astonish'd half, and half inform'd,
Star'd dubious round; some question'd, some exclaim'd,
(Like one who dreaming, between hope and fear,
Is lost in anxious joy) Be that again,
Be that again proclaim'd, distinct, and loud.
Loud, and distinct, it was again proclaim'd;
And still as midnight in the rural shade,
When the gale slumbers, they the words devour'd.

* The king of *Macedonia*.

A while severe amazement held them mute,
Then, bursting broad, the boundless shout to heaven
From many a thousand hearts ecstatic sprung.
On every hand rebellow'd to their joy
The swelling sea, the rocks, and vocal hills:
Thro' all her turrets stately *Corinth* * shook;
And, from the void above of shatter'd air,
The flitting bird fell breathless to the ground.
What piercing bliss! how keen a sense of fame,
Did then, FLAMINIUS, reach thy inmost soul?
And with what deep-felt glory didst thou then
Escape the fondness of transported GREECE?
Mix'd in a tempest of superior joy,
They left the sports; like Bacchanals they flew,
Each other straining in a strict embrace,
Nor strain'd a slave; and loud acclaims till night
Round the Proconsul's tent repeated rung.
Then, crown'd with garlands, came the festive hours;
And music, sparkling wine, and converse warm,
Their raptures wak'd anew.—"Ye Gods! they cry'd,
"Ye guardian Gods of GREECE! And are we free?
"Was it not madness deem'd the very thought?
"And is it true? How did we purchase chains?
"At what a dire expence of kindred blood?
"And are they now dissolv'd? And scarce one drop
"For the fair first of blessings have we paid?
"Courage, and conduct, in the doubtful field,
"When rages wide the storm of mingling war,
"Are rare indeed; but how to generous ends
"To turn success, and conquest, rarer still:
"That the Great Gods and *Romans* only know.
"Lives there on earth, almost to GREECE unknown,

* The *Isthmian* games were celebrated at *Corinth*.

" A people so magnanimous, to quit
" Their native soil, traverse the stormy deep,
" And by their blood and treasure, spent for us,
" Redeem our states, our liberties, and laws;
" There does! there does! Oh Saviour TITUS! ROME!"
Thus thro' the happy night they pour'd their souls,
And in my last reflected beams rejoic'd.
As when the shepherd, on the mountain brow,
Sits piping to his flocks, and gamesome kids;
Mean time the sun, beneath the green earth sunk,
Slants upward o'er the scene a parting gleam:
Short is the glory that the mountain gilds,
Plays on the glittering flocks, and glads the swain;
To western worlds irrevocable roll'd,
Rapid, the source of light recalls his ray.
Here interposing I.—" Oh QUEEN of men!
" Beneath whose sceptre in essential rights
" Equal they live; tho' plac'd, for common good,
" Various, or in subjection or command;
" And that by common choice: alas! the scene,
" With virtue, freedom, and with glory bright,
" Streams into blood, and darkens into woe."
Thus SHE pursu'd.—Near this great æra, ROME
Began to feel the swift approach of Fate,
That now her vitals gain'd: still more and more
Her deep divisions kindling into rage,
And war with chains and desolation charg'd.
From an unequal balance of her sons
These fierce contentions sprung; and, as encreas'd
This hated inequality, more fierce
They flam'd to tumult. INDEPENDANCE fail'd;
Here by luxurious wants, by real there;
And with this virtue every virtue sunk,
As, with the sliding rock, the pile sustain'd.

A last attempt, too late, the GRACCHI made,
To fix the flying scale, and poise the state.
On one side swell'd *Aristocratic* Pride;
With Usury, the Villain! whose fell gripe
Bends by degrees to baseness the free soul;
And Luxury rapacious, cruel, mean,
Mother of vice! While on the other crept
A populace in want, with pleasure fir'd;
Fit for proscriptions, for the darkest deeds,
As the proud feeder bade: inconstant, blind,
Deserting friends at need, and dup'd by foes;
Loud and seditious, when a chief inspir'd
Their headlong fury, but, of him depriv'd,
Already slaves that lick'd the scourging hand.
  This firm Republic, that against the blast
Of opposition rose; that (like an oak,
Nurs'd on feracious *Algidum*, whose boughs
Still stronger shoot beneath the rigid axe)
By loss, by slaughter, from the steel itself,
Even force and spirit drew; smit with the calm,
The dead serene of prosperous fortune, pin'd.
Nought now her weighty legions could oppose,
Her terror * once, on *Afric*'s tawny shore,
Now smoak'd in dust, a stabling now for wolves;
And every dreaded power receiv'd the yoke.
Besides, destructive, from the conquer'd East,
In the soft plunder came that worst of plagues,
That pestilence of mind, a fever'd thirst
For the false joys which Luxury prepares.
Unworthy joys! that wasteful leave behind
No mark of honour, in reflecting hour,
No secret ray to glad the conscious soul;

* CARTHAGE.

At once involving in one ruin wealth,
And wealth-acquiring powers: while stupid Self,
Of narrow gust, and hebetating sense
Devour the nobler faculties of bliss,
Hence *Roman* virtue slacken'd into sloth;
Security relax'd the softening state;
And the broad eye of government lay clos'd.
No more the laws inviolable reign'd,
And public weal no more: but party rag'd;
And partial power, and licence unrestrain'd,
Let Discord thro' the deathful city loose.
First, mild TIBERIUS *, on thy sacred head
The Fury's vengeance fell; the first, whose blood
Had since the consuls stain'd contending ROME.
Of precedent pernicious! With thee bled
Three hundred *Romans;* with thy brother, next,
Three thousand more: till, into battles turn'd
Debates of peace, and forc'd the trembling laws,
The Forum and Comitia horrid grew,
A scene of barter'd power, or reeking gore.
When, half-asham'd, CORRUPTION's thievish Arts,
And ruffian Force begin to sap the mounds
And majesty of laws; if not in time
Repress'd severe, for human aid too strong
The torrent turns, and overbears the whole.
Thus Luxury, Dissension, a mix'd Rage
Of boundless Pleasure and of boundless Wealth,
Want wishing Change, and Waste repairing War,
Rapine for ever lost to peaceful Toil,
Guilt unaton'd, profuse of blood Revenge,
CORRUPTION all avow'd, and lawless Force,
Each heightening each, alternate shook the state.
Mean time Ambition, at the dazzling head

* TIB. GRACCHUS.

Of hardy legions, with the laurels heap'd
And spoil of nations, in one circling blast
Combin'd in various storm, and from its base
The broad REPUBLIC tore. By Virtue built
It touch'd the skies, and spread o'er shelter'd earth
An ample roof: by Virtue too sustain'd,
And balanc'd steady, every tempest sung
Innoxious by, or bade it firmer stand.
But when, with sudden and enormous change,
The First of Mankind sunk into the Last,
As once in Virtue, so in Vice extreme,
This universal fabric yielded loose,
Before Ambition still; and thundering down,
At last, beneath its ruins crush'd a world.
A conquering people, to themselves a prey,
Must ever fall; when their victorious troops,
In blood and rapine savage grown, can find
No land to sack and pillage but their own.
By brutal MARIUS, and keen SYLLA, first
Effus'd the deluge dire of civil blood,
Unceasing woes began, and this, or that,
(Deep-drenching their revenge) nor virtue spar'd,
Nor sex, nor age, nor quality, nor name;
Till ROME, into an human shambles turn'd,
Made desarts lovely.—Oh, to well-earn'd chains
Devoted race!—If no true ROMAN then,
No SCÆVOLA there was, to raise for ME
A vengeful hand: was there no father, robb'd
Of blooming youth to prop his wither'd age?
No son, a witness to his hoary sire
In dust and gore defil'd? No friend, forlorn?
No wretch that doubtful trembled for himself?
None brave, or wild, to pierce a monster's heart,
Who, heaping horror round, no more deserv'd

The sacred shelter of the laws he spurn'd?
No. Sad o'er all profound Dejection sat;
And nerveless Fear. The slave's asylum theirs:
Or flight, ill-judging, that the timid back
Turns weak to slaughter; or partaken guilt.
In vain from SYLLA's vanity I drew
An unexampled deed. The power resign'd,
And all unhop'd the common-wealth restor'd,
Amaz'd the public, and effac'd his crimes.
Thro' streets yet streaming from his murderous hand
Unarm'd he stray'd, unguarded, unassail'd,
And on the bed of peace his ashes laid;
A grace, which I to his demission gave.
But with him dy'd not the despotic soul.
Ambition saw that stooping ROME could bear
A MASTER, *nor had Virtue to be free.*
Hence, for succeeding years, my troubled reign
No certain peace, no spreading prospect knew.
Destruction gather'd round. Still the black soul,
Or of a CATILINE, or RULLUS *, swell'd
With fell designs; and all the watchful art
Of CICERO demanded, all the force,
All the state-wielding magic of his tongue;
And all the thunder of my CATO's zeal.
With these I linger'd; till the flame anew
Burst out in blaze immense, and wrapt the world.
The shameful contest sprung; to whom mankind
Should yield the neck: to POMPEY, who conceal'd
A rage impatient of an equal name;
Or to the nobler CÆSAR, on whose brow
O'er daring Vice deluding Virtue smil'd,

* PUB. SERVILIUS RULLUS, tribune of the people, proposed an *Agrarian Law* in appearance very advantageous for the people, but destructive of their liberty; and which was defeated by the eloquence of CICERO, in his speech against RULLUS.

And who no less a vain superior scorn'd,
Both bled, but bled in vain. New traitors rose.
The venal WILL *be bought, the base have lords.*
To these vile wars I left ambitious slaves;
And from *Philippi*'s field, from where in dust
The last of *Romans*, matchless BRUTUS! lay,
Spread to the north untam'd a rapid wing.
What tho' the first smooth CÆSAR's arts caress'd,
Merit, and virtue, simulating ME?
Severely tender! cruelly humane!
The chain to clinch, and make it softer sit
On the new-broken still ferocious state.
From the dark *Third* *, succeeding, I beheld
Th' imperial monsters all.—A race on earth
Vindictive, sent the scourge of human-kind!
Whose blind profusion drain'd a bankrupt world;
Whose lust to forming Nature seems disgrace;
And whose infernal rage bade every drop
Of ancient blood, that yet retain'd my flame,
To that of PÆTUS †, in the peaceful bath,
Or ROME's affrighted streets, inglorious flow,
But almost just the meanly-patient death,
That waits a tyrant's unprevented stroke.
TITUS indeed gave one short evening gleam;
More cordial felt, as in the midst it spread
Of storm, and horror. The delight of men!
He who the day, when his o'erflowing hand
Had made no happy heart, concluded lost;
TRAJAN and HE, with the MILD SIRE and SON ‡,

* TIBERIUS.

† THRASEA PÆTUS, put to death by *Nero*. TACITUS introduces the account he gives of his death thus:—"After having inhumanly slaughtered "so many illustrious men, he *(Nero)* burned at last with a desire of "cutting off virtue itself in the perſon of THRASEA," &c.

‡ ANTONINUS PIUS, and his adopted son MARCUS AURELIUS, afterwards called ANTONINUS PHILOSOPHUS.

His son of virtue! eas'd awhile mankind;
And Arts reviv'd beneath their gentle beam.
Then was their last effort: what Sculpture rais'd
To TRAJAN's glory, following ttiumphs stole;
And mix'd with *Gothic* forms, (the chisel's shame)
On that triumphal arch *, the forms of GREECE.
Mean-time o'er rocky *Thrace*, and the deep vales
Of gelid *Hæmus*, I pursu'd my flight;
And, piercing farthest *Scythia*, westward swept
Sarmatia †, travers'd by a thousand streams.
A sullen land of lakes, and fens immense,
Of rocks, resounding torrents, gloomy heaths,
And cruel desarts black with sounding pine;
Where Nature frowns: tho' sometimes into smiles
She softens; and immediate, at the touch
Of southern gales, throws from the sudden glebe
Luxuriant pasture, and a waste of flowers.
But, cold-comprest, when the whole loaded heaven
Descends in snow, lost in one white abrupt,
Lies undistinguish'd earth; and, seiz'd by frost,
Lakes, headlong streams, and floods, and oceans sleep.
Yet there life glows; the furry millions there
Deep-dig their dens beneath the sheltering snows:
And there a race of men prolific swarms,
To various pain, to little pleasure us'd;
On whom, keen-parching, beat *Riphæan* winds;
Hard like their soil, and like their climate fierce,
The nursery of nations!—These I rous'd,
Drove land on land, on people people pour'd;
Till from almost perpetual night they broke,
As if in search of day; and o'er the banks

* CONSTANTINE's arch, to build which, that of TRAJAN was destroyed, Sculpture having been then almost entirely lost.

† The ancient *Sarmatia* contained a vast tract of country running all along the north of *Europe*, and *Asia*.

Of yielding empire, only slave-sustain'd,
Resistless rag'd, in vengeance urg'd by ME.
Long in the barbarous heart the bury'd seeds
Of Freedom lay, for many a wintry age;
And tho' my spirit work'd, by slow degrees,
Nought but its pride and fierceness yet appear'd.
Then was the night of time, that parted worlds.
I quitted earth the while. As when the tribes
Aërial, warn'd of rising winter, ride
Autumnal winds, to warmer climates borne;
So, Arts and each good Genius in my train,
I cut the closing gloom, and soar'd to heaven.
In the bright regions there of purest day,
Far other scenes, and palaces, arise,
Adorn'd profuse with other arts divine.
All beauty here below, to them compar'd,
Would, like a rose before the mid-day sun,
Shrink up its blossom; like a bubble break
The passing poor magnificence of kings.
For there the KING OF NATURE, in full blaze,
Calls every splendor forth; and there his court
Amid ætherial powers, and virtues, holds:
Angel, archangel, tutelary gods,
Of cities, nations, empires, and of worlds.
But sacred be the veil, that kindly clouds
A light too keen for mortals; wraps a view
Too softening fair, for those that here in dust
Must chearful toil out their appointed years.
A sense of higher life would only damp
The school-boy's task, and spoil his playful hours.
Nor could the child of Reason, feeble Man,
With vigour thro' this infant being drudge;
Did brighter worlds, their unimagin'd bliss
Disclosing, dazzle and dissolve his mind.

BRITAIN:

BEING THE FOURTH PART OF

LIBERTY,

A POEM.

CONTENTS OF PART IV.

DIFFERENCE betwixt the *Ancients* and *Moderns* slightly touched upon, to ver. 30. Description of the dark ages. The GODDESS of LIBERTY, who during these is supposed to have left earth, returns, attended with ARTS and SCIENCE, to ver. 100. She first descends on *Italy*, *Sculpture*, *Painting*, and *Architecture* fix at *Rome*, to revive their several arts by the great models of antiquity there, which many barbarous invasions had not been able to destroy. The revival of these arts marked out. That sometimes arts may flourish for a while under despotic governments, tho' never the natural and genuine production of them, to ver. 254. *Learning* begins to dawn. The *Muse* and *Science* attend LIBERTY, who in her progress towards GREAT BRITAIN raises several free states and cities. These enumerated, to ver. 381. Author's exclamation of joy, upon seeing the *British* seas and coasts rise in the *Vision*, which painted whatever the GODDESS of LIBERTY said. She resumes her narration. The *Genius of the Deep* appears, and, addressing LIBERTY, associates GREAT BRITAIN into his dominion, to ver. 451. LIBERTY received and congratulated by BRITANNIA, and the *Native Genii* or *Virtues* of the island. These described. Animated by the presence of LIBERTY, they begin their operations. Their beneficent influence contrasted with the works and delusions of opposing *Demons*, to ver. 626. Concludes with an abstract of the *English* history, marking the several advances of LIBERTY, down to her complete establishment at the *Revolution*.

LIBERTY.

PART IV.

STRUCK with the rising scene, thus I amaz'd.
" Ah, GODDESS, what a change! Is earth the same?
" Of the same kind the ruthless race she feeds?
" And does the same fair sun, and æther spread
" Round this vile spot their all-enlivening soul?
" Lo! beauty fails; lost in unlovely forms
" Of little pomp, Magnificence no more
" Exalts the mind, and bids the public smile:
" While to rapacious Interest Glory leaves
" Mankind, and every grace of life is gone."
To this the POWER, whose vital radiance calls
From the brute mass of man an order'd world.
" Wait till the morning shines, and from the depth
" Of *Gothic* darkness springs another day.
" True, Genius droops; the tender ancient taste
" Of Beauty, then fresh-blooming in her prime,
" But faintly trembles thro' the callous soul;
" And Grandeur, or of morals, or of life,
" Sinks into safe pursuits, and creeping cares.
" Even cautious Virtue seems to stoop her flight,
" And aged life to deem the generous deeds

" Of youth romantic. Yet in cooler thought
" Well-reason'd, in researches piercing deep
" Thro' Nature's works, in profitable arts,
" And all that calm Experience can disclose,
" (Slow guide, but sure) behold the world anew
" Exalted rise, with other honours crown'd;
" And, where MY SPIRIT wakes the finer powers,
" *Athenian* laurels still afresh shall bloom."
Oblivious ages pass'd; while earth, forsook
By her best GENII, lay to DEMONS foul,
And unchain'd FURIES, an abandon'd prey.
CONTENTION led the van; first small of size,
But soon dilating to the skies she tow'rs:
Then, wide as air, the livid FURY spread,
And high her head above the stormy clouds,
She blaz'd in omens, swell'd the groaning winds
With wild surmizes, battlings, sounds of war:
From land to land the mad'ning trumpet blew,
And pour'd her venom thro' the heart of man.
Shook to the pole, the North obey'd her call.
Forth rush'd the bloody POWER OF GOTHIC WAR,
War against human-kind: RAPINE, that led
Millions of raging robbers in his train:
Unlistening, barbarous FORCE, to whom the sword
Is reason, honour, law: the FOE OF ARTS
By monsters follow'd, hideous to behold,
That claim'd their place. Outrageous mix'd with these
Another species of tyrannic rule *,
Unknown before, whose cancrous shackles seiz'd
Th' envenom'd soul; a wilder FURY, SHE
Even o'er her ELDER SISTER † tyranniz'd;
Or, if perchance agreed, inflam'd her rage.
Dire was her train, and loud: the SABLE BAND,

* Church power or ecclesiastical tyranny. † Civil tyranny.

Thundering,—" Submit, ye Laity! Ye prophane!
" Earth is the LORD's, and therefore OURS; let kings
" Allow the common claim, and half be theirs;
" If not, behold! the sacred lightning flies:"
SCHOLASTIC DISCORD, with an hundred tongues,
For science uttering jangling words obscure,
Where frighted Reason never yet could dwell:
Of peremptory feature, CLERIC PRIDE,
Whose reddening cheek no contradiction bears;
And HOLY SLANDER, his associate firm,
On whom the *Lying Spirit* still descends:
Mother of tortures! PERSECUTING ZEAL,
High-flashing in her hand the ready torch,
Or ponyard bath'd in unbelieving blood;
Hell's fiercest fiend! of saintly brow demure,
Assuming a celestial seraph's name,
While she beneath the blasphemous pretence
Of pleasing PARENT HEAVEN, the *Source of Love!*
Has wrought more horrors, more detested deeds,
Than all the rest combin'd. Led on by her,
And wild of head to work her fell designs,
Came idiot SUPERSTITION; round with ears
Innumerous strow'd, ten thousand monkish forms
With legends ply'd them, and with tenets, meant
To charm or scare the simple into slaves,
And poison reason; gross, She swallows all,
The most absurd believing ever most.
Broad o'er the whole her universal night,
The gloom still doubling, IGNORANCE diffus'd.
Nought to be seen, but visionary monks
To councils strolling, and embroiling creeds;
Banditti Saints*, disturbing distant lands;
And unknown nations, wandering for a home.

* Crusades.

All lay revers'd: the sacred arts of rule
Turn'd to flagitious leagues against mankind,
And arts of plunder more and more avow'd;
Pure plain Devotion to a solemn farce *;
To holy dotage Virtue, even to guile,
To murder, and a mockery of oaths;
Brave ancient Freedom to the Rage of Slaves †,
Proud of their state, and fighting for their chains;
Dishonour'd Courage to the Bravo's ‡ trade,
To civil broil; and Glory to Romanee.
Thus human life unhing'd to ruin reel'd,
And giddy Reason totter'd on her throne.
At last HEAVEN's best inexplicable scheme,
Disclosing, bade new brightening æras smile.
The high command gone forth, ARTS in my train,
And azure-mantled SCIENCE, swift WE spread
A sounding pinion. Eager pity, mixt
With indignation, urg'd her downward flight.
On *Latium* first we stoop'd, for doubtful life
That panted, sunk beneath unnumber'd woes.
Ah poor *Italia!* what a bitter cup
Of vengeance hast thou drain'd? *Goths*, *Vandals*, *Huns*, *Lombards*, barbarians broke from every land,
How many a ruffian form hast thou beheld?
What horrid jargons heard, where rage alone
Was all thy frighted ear could comprehend?
How frequent by the red inhuman hand,
Yet warm with brother's, husband's, father's blood,
Hast thou thy matrons and thy virgins seen
To violation dragg'd, and mingled death?
What conflagrations, earthquakes, ravage, floods,

* The corruptions of the church of *Rome*.

† Vassalage, whence the attachment of clans to their chief.

‡ Duelling.

Have turn'd thy cities into stony wilds;
And succourless, and bare, the poor remains
Of wretches forth to Nature's common cast?
Added to these, the still continued waste
Of inbred foes *, that on thy vitals prey,
And, double tyrants, seize the very soul.
Where had'st thou treasures for this rapine all?
These hungry myriads, that thy bowels tore,
Heap'd sack on sack, and bury'd in their rage
Wonders of art; whence this grey scene a mine
Of more than gold becomes an orient gems,
Where *Egypt*, *Greece*, and *Rome* united glow.
Here SCULPTURE, PAINTING, ARCHITECTURE, bent,
From ancient models to restore their arts,
Remain'd. A little trace we how they rose.
Amid the hoary ruins Sculpture first,
Deep-digging, from the cavern dark and damp,
Their grave for ages, bid her marble race
Spring to new light. Joy sparkled in her eyes,
And old remembrance thrill'd in every thought,
As she the pleasing resurrection saw.
In leaning site, respiring from his toils,
The well-known Hero†, who delivered *Greece*,
His ample chest, all tempested with force,
Unconquerable rear'd. She saw the head,
Breathing the hero, small, of *Grecian* size,
Scarce more extensive than the sinewy neck;
The spreading shoulders, muscular, and broad;
The whole a mass of swelling sinews, touch'd
Into harmonious shape; she saw, and joy'd.
The yellow hunter, *Meleager*, rais'd
His beauteous front, and thro' the finish'd whole

* The Hierarchy. † The *Hercules* of *Farnese*.

Shows what ideas smil'd of old in *Greece.*
Of raging aspect, rush'd impetuous forth
The Gladiator*. Pityless his look,
And each keen sinew brac'd, the storm of war,
Ruffling, o'er all his nervous body frowns.
The Dying Other† from the gloom she drew.
Supported on his shortened arm he leans,
Prone agonizing; with incumbent fate,
Heavy declines his head; yet dark beneath
The suffering feature sullen vengeance lowrs,
Shame, indignation, unaccomplish'd rage,
And still the cheated eye expects his fall.
All conquest flush'd, from prostrate *Python*, came
The Quivered God‡. In graceful act he stands,
His arm extended with the slackened bow.
Light flows his easy robe, and fair displays
A manly-softened form. The bloom of Gods
Seems youthful o'er the beardless cheek to wave.
His features yet heroic ardor warms;
And sweet subsiding to a native smile,
Mixt with the joy elating conquest gives,
A scatter'd frown exalts his matchless air.
On *Flora* mov'd; her full-proportion'd limbs
Rise thro' the mantle fluttering in the breeze.
The Queen of Love§ arose, as from the deep
She sprung in all the melting pomp of charms.
Bashful she bends, her well-taught look aside
Turns in enchanting guise, where dubious mix
Vain conscious beauty, a dissembled sense
Of modest shame, and slippery looks of love.
The gazer grows enamour'd, and the stone,
As if exulting in its conquest, smiles.

* The Fighting Gladiator.
† The Dying Gladiator.
‡ The *Apollo* of *Belvidere*.
§ The *Venus* of *Medici*.

So turn'd each limb, so swell'd with softening art,
That the deluded eye the marble doubts.
At last her utmost Masterpiece* she found,
That *Maro*† fir'd; the miserable sire,
Wrapt with his sons in Fate's severest grasp.
The serpents, twisting round, their stringent folds
Inextricable tie. Such passion here,
Such agonies, such bitterness of pain,
Seem so to tremble thro' the tortur'd stone,
That the touch'd heart engrosses all the view.
Almost unmark'd the best proportions pass,
That ever *Greece* beheld; and, seen alone,
On the rapt eye th' imperious passions seize:
The father's double pangs, both for himself
And sons convuls'd; to Heaven his rueful look,
Imploring aid, and half-accusing, cast;
His fell despair with indignation mixt,
As the strong-curling monsters from his side
His full-extended fury cannot tear.
More tender touch'd, with varied art, his sons
All the soft rage of younger passions show,
In a boy's helpless fate one sinks oppress'd;
While, yet unpierc'd, the frighted other tries
His foot to steal out of the horrid twine.
She bore no more, but strait from *Gothic* rust
Her chisel clear'd, and dust‡ and fragments drove
Impetuous round. Successive as it went

* The groupe of *Laocoon* and his two sons, destroyed by two serpents.

† See *Æneid* II. ver. 199—227.

‡ It is reported of *Michael Angelo Buonaroti*, the most celebrated master of modern Sculpture, that he wrought with a kind of inspiration, or enthusiastical fury, which produced the effect here mentioned.

From son to son, with more enlivening touch,
From the brute rock it call'd the breathing form;
Till, in a legislator's awful grace
Dress'd, *Buonaroti* bid a *Moses* * rise,
And, looking love immense, a SAVIOUR-GOD *.
Of These observant, PAINTING felt the fire
Burn inward. Then ecstatic she diffus'd
The canvas, seiz'd the pallet, with quick hand
The colours brew'd; and on the void expanse
Her gay creation pour'd, her mimic world.
Poor was the manner of her eldest race,
Barren, and dry; just struggling from the taste,
That had for ages ear'd in cloysters dim
The superstitious herd: yet glorious then
Were deem'd their works; where undevelop'd lay
The future wonders that enrich'd mankind,
And a new light and grace o'er *Europe* cast.
Arts gradual gather streams. Enlarging This
To each his portion of her various gifts
The GODDESS dealt, to none indulging all;
No, not to *Raphael*. At kind distance still
Perfection stands, like Happiness, to tempt
Th' eternal chace. In elegant design
Improving Nature; in ideas fair,
Or great, extracted from the fine antique;
In attitude, expression, airs divine;
Her sons of *Rome* and *Florence* bore the prize.
To those of *Venice* she the magic art
Of colours melting into colours gave.
Theirs too it was by one embracing mass
Of light and shade, that settles round the whole,
Or varies tremulous from part to part,
O'er all a binding harmony to throw,

* Esteemed the two finest pieces of modern Sculpture.

To raise the picture, and repose the sight.
The *Lombard* school * succeeding, mingled both.
Mean-time dread Fanes, and Palaces, around,
Rear'd the magnific front. MUSIC again
Her universal language of the heart
Renew'd; and, rising from the plaintive vale,
To the full concert spread, and solemn quire.
Even bigots smil'd; to their protection took
ARTS not their own, and from them borrow'd pomp:
For in a Tyrant's garden these a while
May bloom, tho' Freedom be their parent soil.
And now confest, with gently-growing gleam,
The morning shone, and westward stream'd its light.
The MUSE awoke. Not sooner on the wing
Is the gay bird of dawn. Artless her voice,
Untaught and wild, yet warbling thro' the woods
Romantic lays. But as her northern course
She, with her tutor SCIENCE, in MY train,
Ardent pursu'd, her strains more noble grew:
While Reason drew the plan, the Heart inform'd
The moral page, and Fancy lent it grace.
ROME and her circling desarts cast behind,
I pass'd not idle to my great sojourn.
On *Arno*'s † fertile plain, where the rich vine
Luxuriant o'er *Etrurian* mountains roves,
Safe in the lap repos'd of private bliss,
I small republics ‡ rais'd. Thrice happy they!
Had social Freedom bound their Peace, and Arts,

* The school of the *Caracci*.

† The river *Arno* runs through *Florence*.

‡ The republics of *Florence*, *Pisa*, *Lucca*, and *Sienna*. They formerly have had very cruel wars together, but are now all peaceably subject to the Great Duke of *Tuscany*, except it be *Lucca*, which still maintains the form of a republic.

Instead of ruling Power, ne'er meant for them,
Employ'd their little cares, and sav'd their fate.
Beyond the rugged *Apennines*, that roll
Far thro' *Italian* bounds their wavy tops,
My path too I with public blessings strow'd;
Free states and cities, where the *Lombard* plain,
In spite of culture negligent and grose,
From her deep bosom pours unbidden joys,
And green o'er all the land a garden spreads.
The barren rocks themselves beneath MY FOOT,
Relenting bloom'd on the *Ligurian* shore.
Thick-swarming people * there, like emmets, seiz'd,
Amid surrounding cliffs, the scatter'd spots
Which Nature left in her destroying rage †,
Made their own fields, nor sigh'd for other lands.
There, in white prospect, from the rocky hill
Gradual descending to the shelter'd shore,
By ME proud *Genoa*'s marble turrets rose.
And while MY genuine Spirit warm'd her sons,
Beneath her *Dorias*, not unworthy, she
Vy'd for the trident of the narrow seas,
Ere BRITAIN yet had open'd all the main.
Nor be the then triumphant state ‡ forgot;
Where ‖, push'd from plunder'd earth, a remnant still,

* The *Genoese* territory is reckoned very populous, but the towns and villages for the most part lie hid among the *Apennine* rocks and mountains.

† According to Dr. *Burnet*'s system of the deluge.

‡ *Venice* was the most flourishing city in *Europe*, with regard to trade, before the passage to the *East Indies* by the *Cape of Good Hope*, and *America*, were discovered.

‖ Those who fled to some marshes in the *Adriatic* gulph, from the desolation spread over *Italy* by an irruption of the *Huns*, first founded there this famous city, about the beginning of the fifth century.

Inspir'd by ME, thro' the dark ages kept
Of MY old *Roman* flame some sparks alive:
The seeming god-built city! which MY hand
Deep in the bosom fix'd of wondering seas.
Astonish'd mortals sail'd, with pleasing awe,
Around the sea-girt walls, by *Neptune* fenc'd,
And down the briny street; where on each hand,
Amazing seen amid unstable waves,
The splendid palace shines; and rising tides,
The green steps marking, murmur at the door.
To this fair Queen of *Adria*'s stormy gulph,
The Mart of nations! long, obedient seas
Roll'd all the treasure of the radiant East.
But now no more. Than one great tyrant worse
(Whose shar'd oppression lightens, as diffus'd)
Each subject tearing, many tyrants rose;
The least the proudest. Join'd in dark cabal,
They jealous, watchful, silent, and severe,
Cast o'er the whole indissoluble chains:
The softer shackles of luxurious ease
They likewise added, to secure their sway.
Thus *Venice* fainter shines; and Commerce thus,
Of toil impatient, flags the drooping sail.
Bursting, besides, his ancient bounds, he took
A larger circle*; found another seat†,
Opening a thousand ports, and, charm'd with toil,
Whom nothing can dismay, far other sons.
The Mountains then, clad with eternal snow,
Confess'd MY power. Deep as the rampant rocks,
By Nature thrown insuperable round,
I planted there a League of friendly states‡,

* The Main Ocean. † *Great Britain.*
‡ The *Swiss Cantons.*

And bade plain Freedom their ambition be.
There in the Vale, where rural Plenty fills,
From lakes, and meads, and furrow'd fields, her horn,
Chief, where the *Leman* * pure emits the *Rhone*,
Rare to be seen! unguilty cities rise,
Cities of brothers form'd; while equal Life,
Accorded gracious with revolving Power,
Maintains them free; and, in their happy streets,
Nor cruel deed, nor misery, is known.
For valour, faith, and innocence of life,
Renown'd, a rough laborious people, there,
Not only give the dreadful *Alps* to smile,
And press their culture on retiring snows;
But, to firm order train'd and patient war,
They likewise know, beyond the nerve remiss
Of Mercenary force, how to defend
The tasteful little their hard toil has earn'd,
And the proud arm of *Bourbon* to defy.
Even, chear'd by ME, their shaggy mountains charm,
More than or *Gallic* or *Italian* plains:
And sickening Fancy oft, when absent long,
Pines to behold their *Alpine* views again †:
The hollow-winding stream: the vail, fair-spread
Amid an amphitheatre of hills;
Whence, vapour-wing'd, the sudden tempest springs:
From steep to steep ascending, the gay train
Of fogs, thick-roll'd into romantic shapes:
The flitting cloud, against the summit dash'd;
And, by the sun illumin'd, pouring bright

* *Geneva*, situated on the *Lacus Lemanus*, a small state, but noble example of the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

† The *Swiss*, after having been long absent from their native country, are seized with such a violent desire of seeing it again, as affects them with a kind of languishing indisposition, called the *Swiss sickness*.

A gemmy shower: hung o'er amazing rocks,
The mountain ash, and solemn-sounding pine:
The snow-fed torrent, in white mazes tost,
Down to the clear etherial lake below:
And, high o'er-topping all the broken scene,
The mountain fading into sky; where shines
On winter winter shivering, and whose top
Licks from their cloudy magazine the snows.
From these descending, as I wav'd My course
O'er vast *Germania*, the ferocious nurse
Of hardy men and hearts affronting death,
I gave some favour'd cities * there to lift
A nobler brow, and thro' their swarming streets,
More busy, wealthy, chearful, and alive,
In each contented face to look my soul.
Thence the loud *Baltic* passing, black with storm,
To wintry *Scandinavia*'s utmost bound;
There, I the manly race †, the parent-hive
Of the mixt kingdoms, form'd into a state
More regularly free. By keener air
Their genius purg'd, and temper'd hard by frost,
Tempest and toil their nerves, the sons of those
Whose only terror was a bloodless death ‡,
They wise and dauntless, still sustain my cause.
Yet there I fix'd not. Turning to the south,
The whispering zephyrs sigh'd at my delay.
Here, with the shifted Vision, burst my joy.
" O the dear prospect! O majestic view!
" See BRITAIN's empire! Lo! the watry vast
" Wide-waves, diffusing the cerulean plain.
" And now, methinks, like clouds at distance seen,

* The *Hans Towns*.
† The *Swedes*.
‡ See note on verse 678.

" Emerging white from deeps of æther, dawn
" My kindred cliffs; whence, wafted in the gale,
" Ineffable, a secret sweetness breathes.
" GODDESS, forgive!—My heart, surpriz'd, o'erflows
" With filial fondness for the land you bless."
As parents to a child complacent deign
Approvance, the CELESTIAL BRIGHTNESS smil'd;
Then thus—As o'er the wave-resounding deep,
To my near reign, the happy Isle, I steer'd
With easy wing; behold! from surge to surge,
Stalk'd the tremendous GENIUS OF THE DEEP.
Around him clouds, in mingled tempest, hung;
Thick-flashing meteors crown'd his starry head;
And ready thunder redden'd in his hand,
Or from it stream'd comprest the gloomy cloud.
Where-e'er he look'd, the trembling waves recoil'd.
He needs but strike the conscious flood, and shook
From shore to shore, in agitation dire,
It works his dreadful will. To ME his voice
(Like that hoarse blast that round the cavern howls,
Mixt with the murmurs of the falling main)
Address'd, began—" By Fate commission'd, go,
" My SISTER-GODDESS now, to yon blest Isle,
" Henceforth the Partner of my rough domain.
" All my dread walks to BRITONS open lie.
" Those that refulgent, or with rosy morn,
" Or yellow evening, flame; those that, profuse
" Drunk by equator-suns, severely shine;
" Or those that, to the poles approaching, rise
" In billows rolling into *Alps* of ice.
" Even, yet untouch'd by daring keel, be theirs
" The vast *Pacific*; that on other worlds,
" Their future conquest, rolls resounding tides.
" Long I maintain'd inviolate my reign;

" Nor *Alexanders* me, nor *Cæsars* brav'd.
" Still, in the crook of shore, the coward sail
" Till now low-crept; and peddling Commerce ply'd
" Between near-joining lands. For BRITONS, chief,
" It was reserv'd, with star-directed prow,
" To dare the middle deep, and drive assur'd
" To distant nations thro' the pathless main.
" Chief, for their fearless hearts the glory waits,
" Long months from land, while the black stormy night
" Around them rages, on the groaning mast
" With unshook knee to know their giddy way;
" To sing, unquell'd, amid the lashing wave;
" To laugh at danger. Theirs the triumph be,
" By deep Invention's keen pervading eye,
" The heart of Courage, and the hand of Toil,
" Each conquer'd ocean staining with their blood,
" Instead of treasure robb'd by ruffian War,
" Round social Earth to circle fair exchange,
" And bind the nations in a golden chain.
" To these I honour'd stoop. Rushing to light
" A race of men behold! whose daring deeds
" Will in renown exalt my nameless plains
" O'er those of fabling Earth, as her's to mine
" In terror yield. Nay, could my savage heart
" Such glories check, their unsubmitting soul
" Would all my fury brave, my tempest climb,
" And might in spite of me my kingdom force."
Here, waiting no reply, the shadowy Power
Eas'd the dark sky, and to the deeps return'd:
While the loud thunder rattling from his hand,
Auspicious, shook opponent *Gallia*'s shore.
Of this encounter glad, MY way to land
I quick pursu'd, that from the smiling sea
Receiv'd ME joyous. Loud acclaims were heard;

And music, more than mortal, warbling, fill'd
With pleas'd astonishment the lab'ring hind,
Who for a while th' unfinish'd furrow left,
And let the listening steer forget his toil.
Unseen by grosser eye, BRITANNIA breath'd,
And her aërial train, these sounds of joy,
Full of old time, since first the rushing flood,
Urg'd by Almighty Power, this favour'd isle
Turn'd flashing from the continent aside,
Indented shore to shore responsive still,
Its Guardian SHE—The GODDESS, whose staid eye
Beams the dark azure of the doubtful dawn.
Her tresses, like a flood of softened light
Thro' clouds imbrown'd, in waving circles play.
Warm on her cheek sits Beauty's brightest rose.
Of high demeanour, stately, shedding grace
With every motion. Full her rising chest;
And new ideas, from her finish'd shape,
Charm'd Sculpture taking might improve her art.
Such the fair Guardian of an isle that boasts,
Profuse as vernal blooms, the fairest dames.
High-shining on the promontory's brow,
Awaiting ME, she stood; with hope inflam'd,
By my mixt Spirit burning in her sons,
To firm, to polish, and exalt the state.
  The NATIVE GENII, round her, radiant smil'd.
COURAGE, of soft deportment, aspect calm,
Unboastful, suffering long, and, till provok'd,
As mild and harmless as the sporting child;
But, on just reason, once his fury rous'd,
No lion springs more eager to his prey:
Blood is a pastime; and his heart, elate,
Knows no depressing fear. THAT VIRTUE known
By the relenting look, whose equal heart

For others feels, as for another self:
Of various name, as various objects wake,
Warm into action, the kind sense within:
Whether the blameless poor, the nobly maim'd,
The lost to reason, the declin'd in life,
The helpless young that kiss no mother's hand,
And the grey second infancy of age,
She gives in public families to live,
A sight to gladden HEAVEN! whether She stands
Fair beck'ning at the hospitable gate,
And bids the stranger take repose and joy:
Whether, to solace honest labour, She
Rejoices those that make the land rejoice:
Or whether to Philosophy, and Arts,
(At once the basis and the finish'd pride
Of government and life) She spreads her hand;
Nor knows her gift profuse, nor seems to know,
Doubling her bounty, that She gives at all.
JUSTICE to these her awful presence join'd,
The mother of the state! No low revenge,
No turbid passions in her breast ferment:
Tender, serene, compassionate of vice,
As the last woe that can afflict mankind,
She punishment awards; yet of the good
More piteous still, and of the suffering whole,
Awards it firm. So fair her just decree,
That, in his judging Peers, each on himself
Pronounces his own doom. O happy land!
Where reigns alone this justice of the Free!
'Mid the bright groupe SINCERITY his front,
Diffusive, rear'd; his pure untroubled eye
The fount of truth. The THOUGHTFUL POWER apart,
Now, pensive, cast on earth his fix'd regard,
Now, touch'd celestial, launch'd it on the sky.

The Genius He whence BRITAIN shines supreme,
The land of light, and rectitude of mind.
He too the fire of fancy feeds intense,
With all the train of passions thence deriv'd:
Not kindling quick, a noisy transient blaze,
But gradual, silent, lasting, and profound.
Near him RETIREMENT, pointing to the shade,
And INDEPENDANCE stood: the generous Pair,
That simple life, the quiet-whispering grove,
And the still raptures of the free-born soul,
To cates prefer by Virtue bought, not earn'd,
Proudly prefer them to the servile pomp,
And to the heart-embitter'd joys of Slaves.
Or should the latter, to the public scene
Demanded, quit his sylvan friend a while;
Nought can his firmness shake, nothing seduce
His zeal, still active for the common-weal;
Nor stormy Tyrants, nor Corruption's tools,
Foul ministers, dark-working by the force
Of secret-sapping gold. All their vile arts,
Their shameful honours, their perfidious gifts,
He greatly scorns; and, if he must betray
His plunder'd country, or his power resign,
A moment's parley were eternal shame:
Illustrious into private life again,
From dirty levees he unstain'd ascends,
And firm in senates stands the patriot's ground,
Or draws new vigour in the peaceful shade.
Aloof the BASHFUL VIRTUE hover'd coy,
Proving by sweet distrust distrusted worth.
Rough LABOUR clos'd the train: and in his hand
Rude, callous, sinew-swell'd, and black with toil,
Came manly INDIGNATION. Sour he seems,
And more than seems, by lawless pride assail'd;

Yet kind at heart, and just, and generous, there
No vengeance lurks, no pale insidious gall:
Even in the very luxury of rage,
He softening can forgive a gallant foe;
The nerve, support, and glory of the land!
Nor be RELIGION, rational, and free,
Here pass'd in silence; whose enraptur'd eye
Sees heaven with earth connected, human things
Link'd to divine: who not from servile fear,
By Rites for some weak tyrant incense fit,
The GOD OF LOVE adores, but from a heart
Effusing gladness, into pleasing awe
That now astonish'd swells, now in a calm
Of fearless confidence that smiles serene;
That lives devotion, one continual hymn,
And then most grateful, when HEAVEN's bounty most
Is right enjoyed. This ever-chearful Power
O'er the rais'd circle ray'd superior day.
I joy'd to join the VIRTUES whence my reign
O'er ALBION was to rise. Each chearing each,
And, like the circling planets from the sun,
All borrowing beams from ME, a heighten'd zeal
Impatient fir'd us to commence our toils,
Or pleasures rather. Long the pungent time
Pass'd not in mutual hails; but, thro' the land
Darting our light, we shone the fogs away.
The VIRTUES conquer with a single look.
Such grace, such beauty, such victorious light,
Live in their presence, stream in every glance,
That the soul won, enamour'd, and refin'd,
Grows their own image, pure etherial flame.
Hence the foul DEMONS, that oppose our reign,
Would still from us deluded mortals wrap;
Or in gross shades they drown the visual ray,

Or by the fogs of prejudice, where mixt
Falsehood and truth confounded, foil the sense
With vain refracted images of bliss.
But chief around the court of flatter'd kings
They roll the dusky rampart, wall o'er wall
Of darkness pile, and with their thickest shade
Secure the throne. No savage *Alp*, the den
Of wolves, and bears, and monstrous things obscene,
That vex the swain, and waste the country round,
Protected lies beneath a deeper cloud.
Yet there we sometimes send a searching ray.
As, at the sacred opening of the morn,
The prowling race retire; so, pierc'd severe,
Before our potent blaze these DEMONS fly,
And all their works dissolve—The whisper'd Tale,
That, like the fabling *Nile*, no fountain knows.
Fair-fac'd Deceit, whose wily conscious eye
Ne'er looks direct. The Tongue that licks the dust,
But, when it safely dares, as prompt to sting:
Smooth crocodile Destruction, whose fell tears
Ensnare. The *Janus* face of courtly Pride;
One to superiors heaves submissive eyes,
On hapless worth the other scouls disdain,
Cheeks that for some weak tenderness alone,
Some virtuous slip, can wear a blush. The Laugh
Prophane, when midnight bowls disclose the heart,
At starving Virtue, and at Virtue's Fools.
Determin'd to be broke, the plighted Faith;
Nay more, the Godless Oath, that knows no ties.
Soft-buzzing Slander; silky moths, that eat
An honest name. The harpy hand, and maw,
Of avaricious Luxury; who makes
The throne his shelter, venal laws his fort,
And, by his service, who betrays his king.

Now turn your view, and mark from *Celtic* * night
To present grandeur how my BRITAIN rose.
Bold were those BRITONS, who, the careless sons
Of Nature, roam'd the forest-bounds, at once
Their verdant city, high-embowering fame,
And the gay circle of their woodland wars:
For by the *Druid* † taught, that death but shifts
The vital scene, they that prime fear despis'd;
And, prone to rush on steel, disdain to spare
An ill-sav'd life that must again return.
Erect from Nature's hand, by tyrant Force,
And still more tyrant Custom, unsubdu'd,
Man knows no master save creating HEAVEN,
Or such as choice and common good ordain.
This general sense, with which the nations I
Promiscuous fire, in BRITONS burn'd intense,
Of future times prophetic. Witness, *Rome*
Who saw'st thy *Cæsar*, from the naked land,
Whose only fort was *British* hearts, repell'd,
To seek *Pharsalian* wreathes. Witness, the toil,
The blood of ages, bootless to secure,
Beneath an Empire's ‡ yoke, a stubborn isle,
Disputed hard, and never quite subdu'd.
The North ‖ remain'd untouch'd, where those who scorn'd
To stoop retir'd; and, to their keen effort
Yielding at last, recoil'd the *Roman* power.
In vain, unable to sustain the shock,
From sea to sea desponding legions rais'd

* GREAT BRITAIN was peopled by the *Celtæ* or *Gauls*.

† The *Druids*, among the ancient *Gauls* and *Britons*, had the care and direction of all religious matters.

‡ The *Roman* empire.

‖ *Caledonia*, inhabited by the *Scots* and *Picts*; whither a great many *Britons*, who would not submit to the *Romans*, retired.

The wall * immense, and yet, on summer's eve,
While sport his lambkins round, the shepherd's gaze.
Continual o'er it burst the Northern Storm †,
As often, check'd, receded; threatening hoarse
A swift return. But the devouring flood
No more endur'd controul, when, to support
The last remains of empire ‡, was recall'd
The weary *Roman*, and the *Briton* lay
Unnerv'd, exhausted, spiritless, and sunk.
Great proof! how men enfeeble into slaves.
The sword behind him flash'd; before him roar'd,
Deaf to his woes, the deep ‖. Forlorn, around
He roll'd his eye, not sparkling ardent flame,
As when *Caractacus* § to battle led
Silurian swains, and *Boadicea* ** taught
Her raging troops the miseries of slaves.

* The wall of *Severus*, built upon *Adrian*'s rampart, which ran for eighty miles quite cross the country, from the mouth of the *Tyne* to *Solway* Frith.

† Irruptions of the *Scots* and *Picts*.

‡ The *Roman* empire being miserably torn by the northern nations, *Britain* was for ever abandoned by the *Romans* in the year 426 or 427.

‖ The *Britons* applying to *Ætius* the *Roman* general for assistance, thus expressed their miserable condition:—"We know not which way to turn "us. The Barbarians drive us to sea, and the sea forces us back to the "Barbarians; between which we have only the choice of two deaths, either "to be swallowed up by the waves, or butchered by the sword."

§ King of the *Silures*, famous for his great exploits, and accounted the best general *Great Britain* had ever produced. The *Silures* were esteemed the bravest and most powerful of all the *Britons*: they inhabited *Herefordshire, Radnorshire, Brecknockshire, Monmouthshire*, and *Glamorganshire*.

** Queen of the *Iceni*: her story is well known.

Then (sad relief!) from the bleak coast, that hears
The *German* ocean roar, deep-blooming, strong,
And yellow-hair'd, the blue-ey'd *Saxon* came.
He came implor'd, but came with other aim
Than to protect. For conquest and defence
Suffices the same arm. With the fierce race
Pour'd in a fresh invigorating stream,
Blood, where unquell'd a mighty spirit glow'd.
Rash war, and perilous battle, their delight;
And immature, and red with glorious wounds,
Unpeaceful death their choice *: deriving thence
A right to feast, and drain immortal bowls,
In *Odin*'s hall; whose blazing roof resounds
The genial uproar of those shades, who fall
In desperate fight, or by some brave attempt;
And tho' more polish'd times the martial Creed
Disown, yet still the fearless habit lives.
Nor were the surly gifts of war their all.
Wisdom was likewise theirs, indulgent laws,
The calm gradations of art-nursing Peace,

* It is certain, that an opinion was fixed and general among them (the *Goths*), that death was but the entrance into another life; that all men who lived lazy and unactive lives, and died natural deaths, by sickness or by age, went into vast caves under ground, all dark and miry, full of noisome creatures usual to such places, and there for ever grovelled in endless stench and misery. On the contrary, all who gave themselves to warlike actions and enterprizes, to the conquest of their neighbours and the slaughter of their enemies, and died in battle, or of violent deaths upon bold adventures or resolutions, went immediately to the vast hall or palace of *Odin*, their god of war, who eternally kept open house for all such guests, where they were entertained at infinite tables, in perpetual feasts and mirth, carousing in bowls made of the skulls of their enemies they had slain: according to the number of whom, every one in these mansions of pleasure was the most honoured and best entertained.

Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE's *Essay on Heroic Virtue.*

And matchless Orders, the deep basis still
On which ascends my BRITISH REIGN. Untam'd
To the refining subtleties of slaves,
They brought an happy government along!
Form'd by that Freedom, which, with secret voice,
Impartial Nature teaches all her sons,
And which of old thro' the whole *Scythian* Mass
I strong inspir'd. Monarchical their state,
But prudently confin'd, and mingled wise
Of each harmonious power: only, too much,
Imperious war into their rule infus'd,
Prevail'd their General-King, and Chieftain-Thanes.
In many a field, by civil fury stain'd,
Bled the discordant *Heptarchy* *; and long
(Educing good from ill) the battle groan'd:
Ere, blood-cemented, *Anglo-Saxons* saw
Egbert † and *Peace* on one united throne.
No sooner dawn'd the fair-disclosing calm
Of brighter days, when lo! the North anew,
With stormy nations black, on ENGLAND pour'd
Woes the severest e'er a people felt.
The *Danish Raven* ‡, lur'd by annual prey,
Hung o'er the land incessant. Fleet on fleet
Of barbarous pirates unremitting tore

* The seven kingdoms of the *Anglo-Saxons*, considered as being united into one common government, under a general in chief or monarch, and by the means of an assembly-general, or *Wittenagemot*.

† *Egbert* king of *Wessex*, who, after having reduced all the other kingdoms of the *Heptarchy* under his dominion, was the first king of *England*.

‡ A famous *Danish* standard was called *Reafan*, or *Raven*. The *Danes* imagined that, before a battle, the Raven wrought upon this standard clapt its wings or hung down its head, in token of victory or defeat.

The miserable coast. Before them stalk'd,
Far seen, the Demon of devouring Flame;
Rapine, and Murder, all with blood besmear'd,
Without or ear, or eye, or feeling heart;
While close behind them march'd the sallow Power
Of desolating Famine, who delights
In grass-grown cities, and in desert fields;
And purple-spotted Pestilence, by whom
Ev'n Friendship scar'd, in sickening horror sinks
Each social sense and tenderness of life,
Fixing at last, the sanguinary race
Spread, from the *Humber*'s loud-resounding shore,
To where the *Thames* devolves his gentle maze,
And with superior arm the *Saxon* aw'd.
But Superstition first, and Monkish dreams,
And monk-directed cloyster-seeking kings,
Had ate away his vigour, ate away
His edge of Courage, and depress'd the soul
Of conquering Freedom, which he once respir'd.
Thus cruel ages pass'd; and rare appear'd
White-mantled Peace, exulting o'er the vale,
As when, with ALFRED *, from the wilds she came
To polic'd cities and protected plains.
Thus by degrees the *Saxon* empire sunk,
Then set intire in *Hastings* † bloody field.
Compendious war! (on BRITAIN's glory bent,
So Fate ordain'd) in that decisive day,
The haughty *Norman* seiz'd at once an isle,
For which, thro' many a century, in vain,

* ALFRED the *Great*, renowned in war, and no less famous in peace for his many excellent institutions, particularly that of Juries.

† The battle of *Hastings*, in which *Harold* II. the last of the *Saxon* kings, was slain, and *William* the *Conqueror* made himself master of *England*.

The *Roman*, *Saxon*, *Dane*, had toil'd and bled.
Of *Gothic* nations this the final burſt;
And, mix'd the genius of these people all,
Their virtues mix'd in one exalted stream,
Here the rich tide of *English* blood grew full.
Awhile my Spirit slept; the land awhile,
Affrighted, droop'd beneath despotic rage.
Instead of *Edward*'s equal gentle laws *,
The furious victor's partial will prevail'd.
All prostrate lay; and, in the secret shade,
Deep-stung but fearful Indignation gnash'd
His teeth. Of Freedom, Property, despoil'd,
And of their bulwark, Arms; with Castles crush'd,
With Ruffians quarter'd o'er the bridled land;
The shivering wretches at the *Curfew* † sound,
Dejected shrunk into their sordid beds,
And, thro' the mournful gloom, of ancient times
Mus'd sad, or dreamt of better. Even to feed
A tyrant's idle sport the peasant starv'd:
To the wild herd, the pasture of the tame,
The chearful hamlet, spiry town, was given,
And the brown forest ‡ roughen'd wide around.
But this so dead, so vile submission, long
Endur'd not. Gathering force, MY gradual flame
Shook off the mountain of tyrannic sway.
Unus'd to bend, impatient of controul,

* *Edward* III. the *Confessor*, who reduced the *West-Saxon*, *Mercian*, and *Danish* laws into one body; which from that time became common to all *England*, under the name of *the Laws of Edward*.

† The *Curfew Bell* (from the *French Couvrefeu*), which was rung every night at eight of the clock, to warn the *English* to put out their fires and candles, under the penalty of a severe fine.

‡ The *New Forest* in *Hampshire*; to make which, the country for above thirty miles in compass was laid waste.

Tyrants themselves the common tyrant check'd.
The Church, by Kings intractable and fierce,
Deny'd her portion of the plunder'd state,
Or tempted, by the timorous and weak,
To gain new ground, first taught their rapine law.
The Barons next a nobler league began,
Both those of *English* and of *Norman* race
In one fraternal nation blended now,
The nation of the Free! press'd by a band
Of Patriots *, ardent as the summer's noon
That looks delighted on, the Tyrant see!
Mark! how with feign'd alacrity he bears
His strong reluctance down, his dark revenge,
And gives the CHARTER, by which life indeed
Becomes of price, a glory to be man.
  Thro' this and thro' succeeding reigns affirm'd,
These long-contested rights, the wholesome winds
Of Opposition † hence began to blow,
And often since have lent the country life.
Before their breath Corruption's insect-blights,
The darkening clouds of evil counsel, fly;
Or should they sounding swell, a putrid court,
A pestilential ministry, they purge,
And ventilated states renew their bloom.
  Tho' with the temper'd Monarchy here mix'd
Aristocratic sway, the People still,
Flatter'd by this or that, as interest lean'd,
No full protection knew. For ME reserv'd,
And for my Commons, was that glorious turn.

* On the 5th of *June* 1215, King *John*, met by the Barons on *Runnemede*, signed the Great Charter of Liberties, or *Magna Charta*.

† The league formed by the Barons, during the reign of *John*, in the year 1213, was the first confederacy made in *England*, in defence of the Nation's interest, against the King.

They crown'd my first attempt, in senates * rose
The Fort of Freedom! Slow till then, alone,
Had work'd that general Liberty, that soul
Which generous Nature breathes, and which, when left
By ME to bondage was corrupted *Rome*,
I thro' the Northern nations wide diffus'd.
Hence many a people, fierce with Freedom, rush'd
From the rude iron regions of the North,
To *Lybian* deserts swarm, protruding swarm;
And pour'd new spirit thro' a slavish world.
Yet, o'er these *Gothic* states, the King and Chiefs
Retain'd the high prerogative of war,
And with enormous property engross'd
The mingled power. But on BRITANNIA's shore
Now present, I to raise MY reign began
By raising the Democracy, the third
And broadest bulwark of the guarded state.
Then was the full the perfect plan disclos'd
Of BRITAIN's matchless Constitution, mixt
Of mutual checking and supporting powers,
KING, LORDS, and COMMONS; nor the name of Free
Deserving, while the Vassal-many droop'd:
For since the moment of the whole they form,
So, as depress'd or rais'd, the balance they
Of public welfare and of glory cast.
Mark, from this period, the continual proof.

* The commons are generally thought to have been first represented in parliament towards the end of *Henry* the Third's reign. To a parliament called in the year 1264, each county was ordered to send four knights, as representatives of their respective shires; and to a parliament called in the year following, each county was ordered to send, as their representatives, two knights; and each city and borough, as many citizens and burgesses. Till then, history makes no mention of them; whence a very strong argument may be drawn, to fix the original of the house of commons to that æra.

When Kings of narrow genius, minion-rid,
Neglecting faithful worth for fawning slaves;
Proudly regardless of their people's plaints,
And poorly passive of insulting foes;
Double, not prudent; obstinate, not firm;
Their mercy, fear; necessity their faith;
Instead of generous fire, presumptuous, hot;
Rash to resolve, and slothful to perform;
Tyrants at once, and slaves; imperious, mean;
To want rapacious joining shameful waste;
By counsels weak and wicked, easy rous'd
To paltry schemes of absolute command;
To seek their splendor in their sure disgrace;
And in a broken ruin'd people, wealth:
When such o'ercast the state, no bond of love,
No heart, no soul, no unity, no nerve,
Combin'd the loose disjointed public, lost
To fame abroad, to happiness at home.
But when an EDWARD * and an HENRY † breath'd
Thro' the charm'd whole one all-exerting soul:
Drawn sympathetic from his dark retreat,
When wide-attracted merit round them glow'd:
When counsels just, extensive, generous, firm,
Amid the maze of state, determin'd kept
Some ruling point in view: when, on the stock
Of public good and glory grafted, spread
Their palms, their laurels; or, if thence they stray'd,
Swift to return, and patient of restraint:
When regal state, pre-eminence of place,
They scorn'd to deem pre-eminence of ease,
To be luxurious drones, that only rob
The busy hive: as in distinction, power,

* *Edward* III. † *Henry* V.

Indulgence, honour, and advantage, first;
When they too claim'd in virtue, danger, toil,
Superior rank; with equal hand, prepar'd
To guard the subject, and to quell the foe:
When such with ME their vital influence shed,
No mutter'd grievance, hopeless sigh, was heard;
No foul distrust thro' wary senates ran,
Confin'd their bounty, and their ardor quench'd:
On Aid, unquestion'd, liberal Aid was given:
Safe in their conduct, by their valour fir'd,
Fond where they led, victorious armies rush'd;
And *Cressy*, *Poitiers*, *Agincourt* * proclaim
What Kings supported by almighty Love,
And People fir'd with Liberty, can do.
Be veil'd the savage reigns †, when kindred rage
The numerous-once *Plantagenets* devour'd,
A race to vengeance vow'd! and when, oppress'd
By private feuds, almost extinguish'd lay
My quivering flame. But, in the next, behold!
A cautious Tyrant ‡ lend it oil anew.
Proud, dark, suspicious, brooding o'er his gold,
As how to fix his throne he jealous cast
His crafty views around; pierc'd with a ray,
Which on his timid mind I darted full,
He mark'd the Barons of excessive sway,
At pleasure making and unmaking kings §;
And hence, to crush these petty Tyrants, plann'd

* Three famous battles, gained by the *English* over the *French*.

† During the civil wars betwixt the families of *York* and *Lancaster*.

‡ *Henry* VII.

§ The famous Earl of *Warwick*, during the reigns of *Henry* VI. and *Edward* IV., was called the King-Maker.

A law *, that let them, by the silent waste
Of luxury, their landed wealth diffuse,
And with that wealth their implicated power.
By soft degrees a mighty change ensu'd,
Even working to this day. With streams, deduc'd
From these diminish'd floods, the country smil'd:
As when impetuous from the snow-heap'd *Alps*,
To vernal suns relenting, pours the *Rhine*;
While undivided, oft, with wasteful sweep,
He foams along; but, thro' *Batavian* meads,
Branch'd into fair canals, indulgent flows;
Waters a thousand fields; and culture, trade,
Towns, meadows, gliding ships, and villas mix'd,
A rich, a wondrous landskip, rises round.
His furious Son † the soul-enslaving chain ‡,
Which many a doating venerable age
Had link by link strong-twisted round the land,
Shook off. No longer could be borne a power,
From HEAVEN pretended, to deceive, to void
Each solemn tie, to plunder without bounds,
To curb the generous soul, to fool mankind;
And, wild at last, to plunge into a sea
Of blood and horror. The returning light,
That first thro' *Wickliff* § streak'd the priestly gloom,
Now burst in open day. Bar'd to the blaze,
Forth from the haunts of Superstition || crawl'd
Her motly sons, fantastic figures all;

* Permitting the Barons to alienate their lands.

† *Henry* VIII. ‡ Of papal dominion.

§ *John Wickliff*, doctor of divinity, who towards the close of the fourteenth century, published doctrines very contrary to those of the church of *Rome*, and particularly denying the Papal authority. His followers grew very numerous, and were called *Lollards*.

|| Suppreſſion of monasteries.

And, wide-dispers'd, their useless fetid wealth
In graceful labour bloom'd, and fruits of peace.
Trade, join'd to these, on every sea display'd
A daring canvass, pour'd with every tide
A golden flood. From other worlds * were roll'd
The guilty glittering stores, whose fatal charms,
By the plain *Indian* happily despis'd,
Yet work'd his woe; and to the blissful groves,
Where Nature liv'd herself among her sons,
And Innocence and Joy for ever dwelt,
Drew Rage unknown to *Pagan* climes before,
The worst, the zeal-inflam'd Barbarian drew.
Be no such horrid commerce, BRITAIN, thine!
But want for want, with mutual aid, supply.
The Commons thus enrich'd, and powerful grown,
Against the Barons weigh'd. ELIZA then,
Amid these doubtful motions steady, gave
The beam to fix. She! like the SECRET EYE
That never closes on a guarded world,
So sought, so mark'd, so seiz'd the Public good,
That self-supported, without one ally,
She aw'd her inward, quell'd her circling, foes.
Inspir'd by ME, beneath her sheltering arm,
In spite of raging *universal Sway* †,
And raging seas repress'd, the *Belgic* states,
My Bulwark on the Continent, arose.
Matchless in all the spirit of her days!
With confidence unbounded, fearless love
Elate, her fervent people waited gay,
Chearful demanded the long-threaten'd Fleet ‡,

* The *Spanish West-Indies*.

† The dominion of the house of *Austria*.

‡ The *Spanish Armada*. *Rapin* says, that after proper measures had been taken, the enemy was expected with uncommon alacrity.

And dash'd the Pride of *Spain* around their isle.
Nor ceas'd the *British* Thunder here to rage:
The deep, reclaim'd, obey'd its awful call;
In fire and smoke *Iberian* ports involv'd,
The trembling foe, even to the centre shook
Of their new-conquer'd world, and skulking stole,
By veering winds, their *Indian* treasure home.
Mean-time, Peace, Plenty, Justice, Science, Arts,
With softer laurels crown'd her happy reign.

As yet uncircumscrib'd the Regal power,
And wild and vague *Prerogative* remain'd
A wide voracious gulph, where swallow'd oft
The helpless Subject lay. This to reduce
To the just limit was MY great effort.

By means, that evil seem to narrow man,
Superior Beings work their mystic will:
From storm and trouble thus a settled calm,
At last, effulgent, o'er BRITANNIA smil'd.

The gathering tempest, HEAVEN-commission'd, came,
Came in the Prince *, who, drunk with flattery, dream
His vain pacific counsels rul'd the world;
Tho' scorn'd abroad, bewilder'd in a maze
Of fruitless treaties; while at home enslav'd,
And by a worthless crew insatiate drain'd,
He lost his people's confidence and love:
Irreparable loss! whence crowns become
An anxious burden. Years inglorious pass'd:
Triumphant *Spain* the vengeful draught enjoy'd:
Abandon'd FREDERICK † pin'd, and RALEIGH bled.

* *James* I.

† *Elector Palatine*, and who had been chosen king of *Bohemia*, but was stript of all his dominions and dignities by the Emperor *Ferdinand*, while *James* the First, his father-in-law, being amused from time to time, endeavoured to mediate a peace.

But nothing that to these internal broils,
That rancour, he began; while lawless Sway,
He, with his slavish Doctors, try'd to rear
On metaphysic, on enchanted ground*,
And all the mazy quibbles of the schools:
As if for One, and sometimes for the Worst,
HEAVEN had mankind in vengeance only made.
Vain the pretence! not so the dire effect,
The fierce, the foolish discord† thence deriv'd,
That tears the country still, by party-rage
And ministerial clamour kept alive.
In action weak, and for the wordy war
Best fitted, faint this prince pursu'd his claim:
Content to teach the subject-herd, how great,
How sacred he! how despicable they!
But his unyielding Son‡ these doctrines drank,
With all a Bigot's rage (who never damps
By reasoning his fire); and what they taught,
Warm, and tenacious, into practice push'd.
Senates, in vain, their kind restraint apply'd:
The more they struggled to support the laws,
His justice-dreading ministers the more
Drove him beyond their bounds. Tir'd with the check
Of faithful Love, and with the flattery pleas'd
Of false designing Guilt, the Fountain§ he
Of Public Wisdom and of Justice shut.
Wide mourn'd the land. Strait to the voted Aid,
Free, cordial, large, of never-failing source,
Th' illegal Imposition follow'd harsh,
With execration given, or ruthless squeez'd

* The monstrous, and till then unheard-of, doctrines of divine indefeasible hereditary right, passive obedience, &c.

† The parties of *Whig* and *Tory*.

‡ *Charles* I.

§ Parliaments.

From an insulted people, by a band
Of the worst ruffians, those of tyrant power.
Oppression walk'd at large, and pour'd abroad
Her unrelenting train: Informers, Spies,
Blood-hounds, that sturdy Freedom to the grove
Pursue; projectors of aggrieving schemes,
Commerce * to load for unprotected seas,
To sell the starving many to the few †,
And drain a thousand ways th' exhausted land.
Even from that Place, whence healing Peace should flow,
And Gospel truth, inhuman bigots shed
Their poison ‡ round; and on the venal bench,
Instead of Justice, Party held the scale,
And Violence the sword. Afflicted years,
Too patient, felt at last their vengeance full.
Mid the low murmurs of submissive fear
And mingled rage, MY HAMBDEN rais'd his voice,
And to the laws appeal'd; the laws no more
In judgment sat, behov'd some other ear.
When instant from the keen resentive North,
By long Oppression, by Religion rous'd,
The Guardian Army came. Beneath its wing
Was call'd, tho' meant to furnish hostile aid,
The more than *Roman* senate. There a flame
Broke out, that clear'd, consum'd, renew'd the land.
In deep emotion hurl'd, nor *Greece*, nor *Rome*,
Indignant bursting from a tyrant's chain,
While, full of ME, each agitated soul
Strung every nerve and flam'd in every eye,
Had e'er beheld such light and heat combin'd!

* Ship-money. † Monopolies.

‡ The raging *High-Church* sermons of these times, inspiring at once a spirit of slavish submission to the court, and of bitter persecution against those whom they call Church and State Puritans.

Such heads and hearts! Such dreadful Zeal, led on
By calm majestic Wisdom! taught its course
What nusance to devour; such wisdom fir'd
With unabating zeal, and aim'd sincere
To clear the weedy State, restore the Laws,
And for the future to secure their sway.
  This then the purpose of my mildest sons.
But man is blind. A nation once inflam'd
(Chief, should the breath of factious Fury blow,
With the wild rage of mad Enthusiast swell'd)
Not easy cools again. From breast to breast,
From eye to eye, the kindling passions mix
In heightened blaze; and, ever wise and just,
High HEAVEN to gracious ends directs the storm.
Thus in one conflagration BRITAIN wrapt,
And by Confusion's lawless sons despoil'd,
KING, LORDS, and COMMONS, thundering to the ground,
Successive rush'd:—Lo! from their ashes rose,
Gay-beaming radiant youth, the *Phœnix State**.
  The grievous yoke of Vassalage, the yoke
Of private life, lay by those flames dissolv'd:
And, from the wasteful, the luxurious King †,
Was purchas'd ‡ that which taught the young to bend.
Stronger restor'd, the Commons tax'd the Whole,
And built on that eternal rock their power.
The Crown, of its hereditary wealth
Despoil'd, on Senates more dependant grew,
And they more frequent, more assur'd. Yet liv'd,
And in full vigour spread that bitter root,
The Passive Doctrines, by their patrons first
Oppos'd ferocious, when they touch themselves.

* At the Restoration. † *Charles* II.

‡ Court of *Wards*.

This wild delusive Cant; the rash Cabal
Of hungry courtiers, ravenous for prey;
The Bigot, restless in a double chain
To bind anew the land; the constant need
Of finding faithless means, of shifting forms,
And flattering Senates, to supply his waste;
These tore some moments from the careless Prince,
And in his breast awak'd the kindred plan.
By dangerous softness long he min'd his way;
By subtle arts, dissimulation deep;
By sharing what Corruption shower'd, profuse;
By breathing wide the gay licentious plague,
And pleasing manners, fitted to deceive.
At last subsided the delirious joy,
On whose high billow, from the saintly reign,
The nation drove too far. A pension'd king,
Against his country brib'd by *Gallic* gold,
The Port * pernicious sold, the *Scylla* since
And fell *Charybdis* of the *British* seas;
Freedom attack'd abroad †, with surer blow
To cut it off at home; the Saviour-League ‡
Of *Europe* broke; the progress even advanc'd
Of universal Sway §, which to reduce
Such seas of blood and treasure BRITAIN cost;
The millions, by a generous people given,
Or squander'd vile, or to corrupt, disgrace,
And awe the land with forces ‖ not their own,
Employ'd; the darling Church herself betray'd;
All these, broad glaring, op'd the general eye,
And wak'd my Spirit, the resisting soul.

* *Dunkirk.*

† The war, in conjunction with *France*, against the *Dutch*.

‡ The Triple Alliance. § Under *Lewis* XIV.

‖ A standing army, raised without the consent of parliament.

Mild was, at first, and half asham'd, the check
Of Senates, shook from the fantastic dream
Of absolute submission, tenets vile!
Which slaves would blush to own, and which, reduc'd
To practice, always honest Nature shock.
Not even the mask remov'd, and the fierce front
Of Tyranny disclos'd; nor trampled laws;
Nor seiz'd each badge of Freedom * thro' the land;
Nor SIDNEY bleeding for th' unpublish'd Page;
Nor on the bench avow'd Corruption plac'd,
And murderous Rage itself, in *Jefferies'* form:
Nor endless acts of Arbitrary Power,
Cruel, and false, could raise the public arm.
Distrustful, scatter'd, of combining chiefs
Devoid, and dreading blind rapacious war,
The patient public turns not, till impell'd
To the near verge of ruin. Hence I rous'd
The Bigot king †, and hurry'd fated on
His measures immature. But chief his zeal,
Out-flaming *Rome* herself, portentous scar'd
The troubled nation: *Mary*'s horrid days
To fancy bleeding rose, and the dire glare
Of *Smithfield* lightened in its eyes anew.
Yet silence reign'd. Each on another scowl'd
Rueful amazement, pressing down his rage;
As, mustering vengeance, the deep thunder frowns,
Awfully still, waiting the high command
To spring. Strait from his country *Europe* sav'd,
To save BRITANNIA, lo! my darling Son,
Than hero more! the patriot of mankind!
Immortal NASSAU came. I hush'd the deep

* The charters of corporations.

† *James* II.

By Demons rous'd, and bade the listed winds *,
Still shifting as behov'd, with various breath,
Waft the DELIVERER to the longing shore.
See! wide alive, the foaming *Channel* † bright
With swelling sails, and all the pride of war;
Delightful view! when Justice draws the sword:
And mark! diffusing ardent soul around,
And sweet contempt of death, MY streaming flag ‡,
Even adverse navies § bless'd the binding gale,
Kept down the glad acclaim, and silent joy'd.
Arriv'd, the pomp, and not the waste of arms,
His progress mark'd. The faint opposing host ||
For once, in yielding, their best victory found,
And by desertion prov'd exalted faith;
While his the bloodless conquest of the heart,
Shouts without groan, and triumph without war.
Then dawn'd the period destin'd to confine
The surge of wild Prerogative, to raise
A mound restraining its imperious rage,

* The Prince of *Orange*, in his passage to *England*, though his fleet had been at first dispersed by a storm, was afterwards extremely favoured by several changes of wind.

† *Rapin*, in his History of *England*:—The third of *November* the fleet entered the *Channel*, and lay by between *Calais* and *Dover*, to stay for the ships that were behind. Here the Prince called a council of war. It is easy to imagine what a glorious show the fleet made. Five or six hundred ships in so narrow a channel, and both the *English* and *French* shores covered with numberless spectators, are no common sight. For my part, who was then on board the fleet, I own it struck me extremely.

‡ The Prince placed himself in the main body, carrying a flag with *English* colours, and their Highnesses' arms surrounded with this motto; THE PROTESTANT RELIGION AND THE LIBERTIES OF ENGLAND; and underneath the motto of the house of *Nassau*, JE MAINTIENDRAI, *I will maintain*. RAPIN.

§ The *English* fleet. || The King's army.

And bid the raving deep no farther flow.
Nor were, without that fence, the swallow'd state
Better than *Belgian* plains without their dykes,
Sustaining weighty seas. This, often sav'd
By more than human hand, the public saw,
And seiz'd the white-wing'd moment. Pleas'd to yield
Destructive power *, a wise heroic prince †
Even lent his aid—Thrice happy did they know
Their happiness, BRITANNIA'S BOUNDED KINGS!
What tho' not theirs the boast, in dungeon glooms
To plunge bold Freedom; or, to chearless wilds,
To drive him from the cordial face of friend;
Or fierce to strike him at the midnight hour,
By mandate blind, not Justice, that delights
To dare the keenest eye of open day.
What tho' no glory to controul the laws,
And make injurious Will their only rule,
They deem it! What tho', tools of wanton power,
Pestiferous Armies swarm not at their call!
What tho' they give not a relentless crew
Of Civil Furies, proud Oppression's fangs,
To tear at pleasure the dejected land,
With starving labour pampering idle waste!
To clothe the naked, feed the hungry, wipe
The guiltless tear from lone Affliction's eye;
To raise hid Merit, set th' alluring light
Of Virtue high to view; to nourish Arts,
Direct the thunder of an injur'd state,
Make a whole glorious people sing for joy,
Bless human kind, and thro' the downward depth
Of future times, to spread that better Sun

* By the *Bill of Rights*, and the *Act of Succession*.

† *William* III.

Which lights up *British* Soul: for deeds like these,
The dazzling fair career unbounded lies;
While (still superior bliss!) the dark abrupt
Is kindly barr'd, the precipice of ill.
Oh luxury divine! O poor to this,
Ye giddy glories of Despotic thrones!
By this, by this indeed, is imag'd HEAVEN,
By boundless Good, without the power of Ill.
And now behold! exalted as the cope
That swells immense o'er many-peopled earth,
And like it, free, MY FABRIC stands complete,
The PALACE OF THE LAWS. To the four heavens
Four gates impartial thrown, unceasing crowds,
With Kings themselves the hearty peasant mix'd,
Pour urgent in. And tho' to different ranks
Responsive place belongs, yet equal spreads
The sheltering roof o'er all; while plenty flows,
And glad contentment echoes round the whole.
Ye floods descend! Ye winds, confirming, blow!
Nor outward tempest, nor corrosive time,
Nought but the felon undermining hand
Of dark CORRUPTION, can its frame dissolve,
And lay the toil of ages in the dust.

THE

PROSPECT:

BEING THE FIFTH PART OF

LIBERTY,

A POEM.

CONTENTS OF PART V.

AUTHOR addresses the GODDESS of LIBERTY, marking the happiness and grandeur of GREAT BRITAIN, as arising from HER influence; to ver. 88. SHE resumes HER discourse, and points out the chief VIRTUES which are necessary to maintain HER ESTABLISHMENT there; to ver. 374. Recommends, as ITS last ornament and finishing, SCIENCES, FINE ARTS, and PUBLIC WORKS. The encouragement of these urged from the example of *France*, though under a despotic government; to ver. 549. The whole concludes with a PROSPECT of future times, given by the GODDESS of LIBERTY: this described by the Author, as it passes in VISION before him.

LIBERTY.

PART V.

HERE interposing, as the GODDESS paus'd;——
" Oh, blest BRITANNIA! in thy presence blest,
" THOU guardian of mankind! whence spring, alone,
" All human grandeur, happiness, and fame:
" For toil, by THEE protected, feels no pain;
" The poor's man's lot with milk and honey flows;
" And, gilded with thy rays, even death looks gay.
" Let other lands the potent blessings boast
" Of more exalting suns. Let *Asia*'s woods,
" Untended, yield the vegetable fleece:
" And let the little insect-artist form,
" On higher life intent, its silken tomb.
" Let wondering rocks, in radiant birth, disclose
" The various-tinctur'd children of the sun.
" From the prone beam let more delicious fruits
" A flavour drink, that in one piercing taste
" Bids each combine. Let *Gallic* vineyards burst
" With floods of joy; with mild balsamic juice
" The *Tuscan* olive. Let *Arabia* breathe
" Her spicy gales, her vital gums distil.
" Turbid with gold, let southern rivers flow;

" And orient floods draw soft, o'er pearls, their maze.
" Let *Afric* vaunt her treasures; let *Peru*
" Deep in her bowels her own ruin breed,
" The yellow traitor that her bliss betray'd—
" Unequall'd bliss!—and to unequall'd rage!
" Yet nor the gorgeous East, nor golden South,
" Nor, in full prime, that new-discover'd world,
" Where flames the falling day, in wealth and praise
" Shall with BRITANNIA vie, while, GODDESS, she
" Derives her praise from THEE, her matchless charms.
" Her hearty fruits the hand of Freedom own;
" And, warm with culture, her thick-clustering fields
" Prolific teem. Eternal verdure crowns
" Her meads; her gardens smile eternal spring.
" She gives the hunter-horse, unquell'd by toil,
" Ardent to rush into the rapid chace:
" She, whitening o'er her downs, diffusive pours
" Unnumber'd flocks: she weaves the fleecy robe
" That wraps the nations: she, to lusty droves,
" The richest pasture spreads; and, her's, deep-wave
" Autumnal seas of pleasing plenty round.
" These her delights; and by no baneful herb,
" No darting tyger, no grim lion's glare,
" No fierce-descending wolf, no serpent roll'd
" In spires immense progressive o'er the land,
" Disturb'd. Enlivening these, add cities, full
" Of wealth, of trade, of chearful-toiling crowds:
" Add thriving towns; add villages and farms,
" Innumerous sow'd along the lively vale,
" Where bold unrival'd peasants happy dwell:
" Add ancient seats, with venerable oaks
" Embosom'd high, while kindred floods below
" Wind thro' the mead; and those of modern hand,
" More pompous, add, that splendid shine afar.

" Need I her limpid lakes, her rivers name,
" Where swarm the finny race? Thee, chief, O *Thames!*
" On whose each tide, glad with returning sails,
" Flows in the mingled harvest of mankind?
" And thee, thou *Severn*, whose prodigious swell,
" And waves resounding, imitate the main?
" Why need I name her deep capacious ports,
" That point around the world? And why her seas?—
" All ocean is her own, and every land
" To whom her ruling thunder ocean bears.
" She too the mineral feeds: th' obedient Lead,
" The warlike Iron, nor the peaceful less,
" Forming of life, art-civiliz'd, the bond;
" And that the *Tyrian* merchant sought of old *,
" Not dreaming then of BRITAIN's brighter fame.
" She rears to Freedom an undaunted race:
" Compatriot, zealous, hospitable, kind,
" Her's the warm CAMBRIAN: her's the lofty SCOT,
" To hardship tam'd, active in arts and arms,
" Fir'd with a restless, an impatient flame,
" That leads him raptur'd where Ambition calls:
" And ENGLISH MERIT her's; where meet, combin'd,
" Whate'er high fancy, sound judicious thought,
" An ample generous heart, undrooping soul,
" And firm tenacious valour, can bestow.
" Great nurse of fruits, of flocks, of commerce, SHE!
" Great nurse of men! By THEE, O GODDESS, taught,
" Her old renown I trace; disclose her source
" Of wealth, of grandeur, and to BRITONS sing
" A strain the Muses never touch'd before.
" *But how shall this* THY *mighty* KINGDOM *stand?*
" *On what unyielding base? how finish'd shine?*"

* Tin.

At this HER eye, collecting all its fire,
Beam'd more than human; and HER awful voice,
Majestic thus SHE rais'd:—"To BRITONS bear
"This closing strain, and with intenser note
"Loud let it sound in their awaken'd ear."
On VIRTUE *can alone* MY KINGDOM *stand*,
On PUBLIC VIRTUE, EVERY VIRTUE JOIN'D:
For, lost this social cement of mankind,
The greatest empires, by scarce-felt degrees,
Will moulder soft away; till, tottering loose,
They prone at last to total ruin rush.
Unblest by VIRTUE, Government a League
Becomes, a circling junto of the Great,
To rob by law; Religion mild a Yoke
To tame the stooping soul, a trick of state
To mask their rapine, and to share the prey.
What are without IT Senates, save a face
Of consultation deep, and reason free;
While the determin'd voice and heart are sold?
What boasted Freedom, save a sounding name?
And what election, but a market vile
Of slaves self-barter'd? VIRTUE! without THEE,
There is no ruling eye, no nerve, in states;
War has no vigour, and no safety peace:
Even justice warps to party; laws oppress;
Wide thro' the land their weak protection fails,
First broke the balance, and then scorn'd the sword.
Thus nations sink, society dissolves;
Rapine, and guile, and violence, break loose,
Everting life, and turning love to gall;
Man hates the face of man, and *Indian* woods,
And *Lybia*'s hissing sands, to him are tame.
By those THREE VIRTUES be the frame sustain'd
Of BRITISH FREEDOM:—INDEPENDENT LIFE;

INTEGRITY IN OFFICE; and, o'er all
Supreme, A PASSION FOR THE COMMONWEAL.
Hail! INDEPENDENCE, hail! HEAVEN's next best gift
To that of life and an immortal soul!
The life of life! that to the banquet high
And sober meal gives taste; to the bow'd roof
Fair-dream'd repose, and to the cottage charms.
Of public Freedom, hail, thou secret Source!
Whose streams, from every quarter confluent, form
MY better *Nile*, that nurses human life.
By rills from thee deduc'd, irriguous, fed,
The private field looks gay, with Nature's wealth
Abundant flows, and blooms with each delight
That Nature craves. Its happy master there,
The ONLY FREEMAN, walks his pleasing round;
Sweet-featur'd Peace attending; fearless Truth;
Firm Resolution; Goodness, blessing all
That can rejoice; Contentment, surest friend;
And still freshs tores from Nature's book deriv'd,
Philosophy, companion ever new.
These chear his rural, and sustain or fire,
When into action call'd, his busy hours.
Mean-time, true-judging moderate desires,
Oeconomy and Taste combin'd, direct
His clear affairs, and from debauching fiends
Secure his little kingdom. Nor can those
Whom Fortune heaps, without these Virtues, reach
That truce with pain, that animated ease,
That self-enjoyment springing from within;
That INDEPENDENCE, active, or retir'd,
Which make the soundest bliss of man below;
But, lost beneath the rubbish of their means,
And drain'd by wants to Nature all unknown,

A wandering, tasteless, gaily-wretched train,
Tho' rich, are beggars; and tho' noble, slaves
Lo! damn'd to wealth, at what a gross expence,
They purchase disappointment, pain, and shame.
Instead of hearty hospitable chear,
See! how the hall with brutal riot flows;
While in the foaming flood, fermenting, steep'd,
The country maddens into party-rage.
Mark! those disgraceful piles of wood and stone;
Those parks and gardens, where, his haunts betrimm'd,
And Nature by presumptuous Art oppress'd,
The woodland Genius mourns. See! the full board
That steams disgust, and bowls that give no joy:
No Truth invited there to feed the mind,
Nor Wit, the wine-rejoicing reason quaffs.
Hark! how the dome with Insolence resounds,
With those retain'd by Vanity to scare
Repose and friends. To tyrant Fashion, mark!
The costly worship paid, to the broad gaze
Of fools. From still delusive day to day,
Led an eternal round of lying hope,
See! self-abandon'd, how they roam adrift,
Dash'd o'er the town, a miserable wreck!
Then to adore some warbling eunuch turn'd,
With *Midas'* ears they crowd; or to the buzz
Of masquerade unblushing; or, to shew
Their scorn of Nature, at the tragic scene
They mirthful sit, or prove the comic true:
But, chief, behold! around the rattling board
The civil robbers rang'd; and even the fair,
The tender fair, each sweetness laid aside,
As fierce for plunder as all-licens'd troops
In some sack'd city. Thus dissolv'd their wealth,

Without one generous luxury dissolv'd,
Or quarter'd on it many a needless want,
At the throng'd levee bends the venal tribe:
With fair, but faithless smiles, each varnish'd o'er,
Each smooth as those that mutually deceive,
And for their falsehood each despising each:
Till shook their patron by the wintry winds,
Wide flies the withered shower, and leaves him bare.
O far superior *Afric*'s sable sons,
By merchant pilfer'd, to these willing Slaves!
And, rich, as unsqueez'd favourite, to them,
Is he who can his Virtue boast alone!
BRITONS! be firm!—nor let Corruption sly
Twine round your heart indissoluble chains!
The steel of BRUTUS burst the grosser bonds
By *Cæsar* cast o'er ROME; but still remain'd
The soft enchanting fetters of the mind,
And other *Cæsars* rose. Determin'd, hold
Your INDEPENDENCE; for, that once destroy'd,
Unfounded, FREEDOM is a morning dream,
That flits aërial from the spreading eye.
Forbid it, HEAVEN! that ever I need urge
INTEGRITY IN OFFICE on MY sons!
Inculcate common honour——not to rob——
And whom?—the gracious, the confiding hand,
That lavishly rewards; the toiling poor,
Whose cup with many a bitter drop is mixt;
The guardian public; every face they see,
And every friend; nay, in effect, themselves.
As in familiar life, the villain's fate
Admits no cure; so, when a desperate age
At this arrives, I the devoted race
Indignant spurn, and, hopeless, soar away.

But, ah too little known to modern times!
Be not the noblest passion past unsung;
That ray peculiar, from UNBOUNDED LOVE
Effus'd, which kindles the heroic soul;
DEVOTION TO THE PUBLIC. Glorious flame!
Celestial ardor! in what unknown worlds,
Profusely scatter'd thro' the blue immense,
Hast thou been blessing myriads, since in ROME,
Old virtuous ROME, so many deathless names
From Thee their lustre drew? since, taught by Thee,
Their poverty put splendor to the blush,
Pain grew luxurious, and even death delight?
O wilt thou ne'er, in thy long period, look,
With blaze direct, on this MY last retreat?
'Tis not enough, from Self right understood
Reflected, that thy rays inflame the heart:
Tho' VIRTUE not disdains appeals to Self,
Dreads not the trial; all her joys are true,
Nor is there any real joy save her's.
Far less the tepid, the declaiming race,
Foes to Corruption, to its wages friends,
Or those whom private passions, for a while,
Beneath MY standard list, can they suffice
To raise and fix the glory of MY REIGN?
An active flood of universal Love
Must swell the breast. First, in effusion wide,
The restless spirit roves creation round,
And seizes every being: stronger then
It tends to Life, whate'er the kindred search
Of bliss allies: then, more collected still,
It urges Human-kind: a passion grown,
At last, the central Parent-Public calls
Its utmost effort forth, awakes each sense,

The comely, grand, and tender. Without this,
This awful pant, shook from sublimer powers
Than those of self, this HEAVEN-infus'd delight,
This moral gravitation, rushing prone
To press the public Good, MY system soon,
Traverse, to several selfish centres drawn,
Will reel to ruin: while for ever shut
Stand the bright portals of desponding Fame.
From sordid Self shoot up no shining deeds,
None of those ancient lights that gladden earth,
Give grace to being, and arouse the Brave
To just Ambition, VIRTUE's quickening fire!
Life tedious grows, an idly-bustling round,
Fill'd up with actions animal and mean;
A dull gazette! Th' impatient reader scorns
The poor historic page; till kindly comes
Oblivion, and redeems a people's shame.
Not so the times when, emulation-stung,
GREECE shone in Genius, Science, and in Arts;
And ROME in Virtues dreadful to be told!
To live was glory then! and charm'd mankind:
Thro' the deep periods of devolving time,
Those, raptur'd, copy; These, astonish'd, read.
True, a corrupted state, with every vice
And every meanness foul, this passion damps.
Who can, unshock'd, behold the cruel eye?
The pale inveigling smile? The ruffian front?
The wretch abandon'd to relentless self,
Equally vile if miser or profuse?
Powers not of GOD, assiduous to corrupt?
The fell deputed Tyrant, who devours
The poor and weak, at distance from redress*?

* Lord MOLESWORTH, in his account of *Denmark*, says;—It is oberved, that in limited monarchies and commonwealths, a neighbourhood to the ſeat of the government is advantageous to the subjects; whilst the distant provinces are less thriving, and more liable to oppression.

Delirious faction bellowing loud MY name?
The false fair-seeming patriot's hollow boast?
A race resolv'd on bondage, fierce for chains,
MY sacred rights a merchandise alone
Esteeming, and to work their feeder's will
By deeds, a horror to mankind prepar'd,
As were the dregs of *Romulus* of old?
Who these indeed can undetesting see?—
But who unpitying? To the generous eye
Distress is Virtue; and, tho' self-betray'd,
A people struggling with their fate must rouse
The hero's throb. Nor can a land, at once,
Be lost to virtue quite. How glorious then!
Fit luxury for gods! to save the good,
Protect the feeble, dash bold vice aside,
Depress the wicked, and restore the frail.
Posterity, besides, the young are pure,
And sons may tinge their father's cheek with shame.
Should then the times arrive (which HEAVEN avert!)
That BRITONS bend unnerv'd, not by the force
Of arms, more generous and more manly, quell'd,
But by Corruption's soul-dejecting arts,
Arts impudent! and gross! by their own gold,
In part bestow'd, to bribe them to give all.
With party raging, or immers'd in sloth,
Should they BRITANNIA's well-fought laurels yield
To slily-conquering *Gaul*; even from her brow
Let her own naval oak be basely torn
By such as tremble at the stiffening gale,
And nerveless sink, while others sing rejoic'd.
Or (darker prospect! scarce one gleam behind
Disclosing) should the broad corruptive plague
Breathe from the city to the farthest hut
That sits serene within the forest-shade;

The fever'd people fire, inflame their wants,
And their luxurious thirst, so gathering rage,
That, were a buyer found, they stand prepar'd
To sell their birthright for a cooling draught:
Should shameless pens for plain Corruption plead;
The hir'd assassins of the commonweal!
Deem'd the declaiming rant of GREECE and ROME,
Should Public Virtue grow the public scoff,
Till Private, failing, staggers thro' the land;
Till round the city loose mechanic Want,
Dire-prowling nightly, makes the chearful haunts
Of men more hideous than *Numidian* wilds:
Nor from its fury sleeps the vale in peace;
And Murders, Horrors, Perjuries abound:
Nay, till to lowest deeds the highest stoop;
The rich, like starving wretches, thirst for gold;
And those, on whom the vernal showers of HEAVEN
All-bounteous fall, and that prime lot bestow,
A power to live to Nature and Themselves,
In sick attendance wear their anxious days,
With fortune, joyless, and with honours, mean.
Mean-time, perhaps, Profusion flows around,
The Waste of War, without the Works of Peace;
No mark of millions in the gulph absorpt
Of uncreating Vice, none but the rage
Of rous'd Corruption still demanding more.
That very portion, which (by faithful skill
Employ'd) might make the smiling Public rear
Her ornamented head, drill'd thro' the hands
Of mercenary tools, serves but to nurse
A locust-band within, and in the bud
Leaves starv'd each work of dignity and use.
I paint the worst. But should these times arrive,
If any nobler passion yet remain,

Let all MY Sons all parties fling aside,
Despise their nonsense, and together join;
Let Worth and Virtue, scorning low despair,
Exerted full, from every quarter shine
Commix'd in heighten'd blaze. Light flash'd to light,
Moral or intellectual, more intense
By giving glows. As on pure winter's eve,
Gradual, the stars effulge; fainter, at first,
They, straggling, rise; but when the radiant host,
In thick profusion pour'd, shine out immense,
Each casting vivid influence on each,
From pole to pole a glittering deluge plays,
And worlds above rejoice, and men below.

But why to BRITONS this superflous strain?—
Good-nature, honest truth even somewhat blunt,
Of crooked baseness an indignant scorn,
A zeal unyielding in their country's cause,
And ready Bounty, wont to dwell with them—
Nor only wont—Wide o'er the land diffus'd,
In many a blest retirement still they dwell.

To softer prospect turn we now the view,
To laurel'd SCIENCE, ARTS, and PUBLIC WORKS,
That lend MY FINISH'D FABRIC comely pride,
Grandeur and grace. Of sullen genius he!
Curs'd by the Muses! by the Graces loath'd!
Who deems beneath the public's high regard
These last enlivening touches of my reign.
However puff'd with power, and gorg'd with wealth,
A nation be; let trade enormous rise,
Let East and South their mingled treasures pour,
Till, swell'd, impetuous the corrupting flood
Burst o'er the city and devour the land:
Yet these neglected, these recording Arts,
Wealth rots a nusance; and, oblivious sunk,

That nation must another *Carthage* lie;
If not by them, on monumental brass,
On sculptur'd marble, on the deathless page,
Imprest, renown had left no trace behind:
In vain, to future times, the sage had thought,
The legislator plann'd, the hero found
A beauteous death, the patriot toil'd in vain.
Th' awarders they of Fame's immortal wreath,
They rouse Ambition, they the mind exalt,
Give great ideas, lovely forms infuse,
Delight the general eye, and, drest by them,
The moral *Venus* glows with double charms.
SCIENCE, MY close associate, still attends
Where-e'er I go. Sometimes, in simple guise,
She walks the furrow with the Consul Swain,
Whispering unletter'd wisdom to the heart
Direct; or, sometimes, in the pompous robe
Of Fancy drest, she charms *Athenian* wits,
And a whole sapient city round her burns.
Then o'er her brow MINERVA'S terrors nod:
With XENOPHON, sometimes, in dire extremes,
She breathes deliberate soul, and makes Retreat *
Unequall'd glory: with the *Theban* sage,
EPAMINONDAS, first and best of men!
Sometimes she bids the deep-embattled host,
Above the vulgar reach resistless form'd,
March to sure conquest—never gain'd before †!
Nor on the treacherous seas of giddy state

* The famous Retreat of the Ten Thousand was chiefly conducted by XENOPHON.

† *Epaminondas*, after having beat the *Lacedæmonians* and their allies in the battle of *Leuctra*, made an incurſion, at the head of a powerful army, into *Laconia*. It was now six hundred years since the *Dorians* had poſſeſſed this country, and in all that time the face of an enemy had not been seen within their territories. *Plutarch* in *Agesilaus*.

Unskilful she: when the triumphant tide
Of high-swoln Empire wears one boundless smile,
And the gale tempts to new pursuits of fame,
Sometimes, with SCIPIO, she collects her sail,
And seeks the blissful shore of rural ease,
Where, but th' *Aonian* Maids, no Syrens sing;
Or should the deep-brew'd tempest muttering rise,
While rocks and shoals perfidious lurk around,
With TULLY she her wide-reviving light
To senates holds, a *Catiline* confounds,
And saves a while from *Cæsar* sinking ROME.
Such the kind power, whose piercing eye dissolves
Each mental fetter, and sets Reason free;
For ME inspiring an enlighten'd zeal,
The more tenacious as the more convinc'd,
How happy Freemen, and how wretched Slaves.
To BRITONS not unknown, to BRITONS full
The GODDESS spreads her stores, the secret soul
That quickens trade, the breath unseen that wafts
To them the treasures of a balanc'd world.
But FINER ARTS (save what the MUSE has sung
In daring flight, above all modern wing)
Neglected droop the head; and PUBLIC WORKS,
Broke by Corruption into private gain,
Not ornament, disgrace; not serve, destroy.
Shall BRITONS, by their own JOINT WISDOM rul'd
Beneath one ROYAL HEAD, whose vital power
Connects, enlivens, and exerts the WHOLE;
In FINER ARTS, and PUBLIC WORKS, shall they
To *Gallia* yield? yield to a land that bends,
Deprest, and broke, beneath the will of One?
Of One who, should th' unkingly thirst of gold,
Or tyrant passions, or ambition, prompt,
Calls Locust-armies o'er the blasted land:

Drains from its thirsty bounds the springs of wealth,
His own insatiate reservoir to fill:
To the lone desert Patriot-Merit frowns;
Or into dungeons, Arts; when they, their chains
Indignant bursting, for their nobler works
All other Licence scorn but TRUTH's and MINE.
Oh shame to think! shall BRITONS, in the field
Unconquer'd still, the better laurel lose?
Even in that Monarch's * reign, who vainly dream't,
By giddy power betray'd, and flattered pride,
To grasp unbounded sway; while, swarming round,
His armies dar'd all *Europe* to the field;
To hostile hands while treasure flow'd profuse,
And, that great source of treasure, subjects' blood,
Inhuman squander'd, sicken'd every land;
From BRITAIN, chief, while MY superior sons,
In vengeance rushing, dash'd his idle hopes,
And bad his agonizing heart be low:
Even then, as in the golden calm of peace,
What PUBLIC WORKS at home, what ARTS arose!
What various SCIENCE shone! what GENIUS glow'd!
'Tis not for ME to paint, diffusive shot
O'er fair extents of land, the shining road;
The flood-compelling arch; the long canal †,
Thro' mountains piercing and uniting seas;
The dome ‡ resounding sweet with infant joy,
From famine sav'd, or cruel-handed shame;
And that where Valour counts his noble scars ‡;
The land where social Pleasure loves to dwell,
Of the fierce Demon, Gothic Duel, freed;
The robber from his farthest forest chas'd;

* *Lewis* XIV. † The canal of *Languedoc*.
‡ The hospitals for foundlings and invalids.

The turbid city clear'd, and, by degrees,
Into sure peace the best police refin'd,
Magnificence, and grace, and decent joy.
Let *Gallic* bards record, how honour'd ARTS
And SCIENCE, by despotic bounty bless'd,
At distance flourish'd from MY PARENT-EYE,
Restoring ancient taste; how BOILEAU rose;
How the big ROMAN soul shook, in CORNEILLE,
The trembling stage: in elegant RACINE,
How the more powerful tho' more humble voice
Of nature-painting GREECE, resistless breath'd
The whole-awaken'd heart: how MOLIERE's scene,
Chastis'd and regular, with well-judg'd wit,
Not scatter'd wild, and native humour, grac'd,
Was life itself. To public honours rais'd,
How learning in warm seminaries* spread;
And, more for glory than the small reward,
How emulation strove. How their pure tongue
Almost obtain'd what was deny'd their arms.
From *Rome*, awhile, how PAINTING, courted long,
With POUSSIN came; Ancient Design, that lifts
A fairer front, and looks another soul.
How the kind Art†, that of unvalu'd price
The fam'd and only picture easy gives,
Refin'd her touch, and, thro' the shadow'd piece,
All the live spirit of the painter pour'd.
Coyest of Arts, how Sculpture northward deign'd
A look, and bade her GIRARDON arise;
How lavish grandeur blaz'd; the barren waste,
Astonish'd, saw the sudden palace swell,
And fountains spout amid its arid shades.

* The Academies of Sciences, of the Belles Lettres, and of Painting.
† Engraving.

For leagues bright vistas opening to the view,
How forests in majestic gardens smil'd.
How menial Arts, by their gay Sisters taught,
Wove the deep flower, the blooming foliage train'd
In joyous figures o'er the silky lawn,
The palace cheer'd, illum'd the story'd wall,
And with the pencil vy'd the glowing loom*.
These laurels, LOUIS, by the droppings rais'd
Of thy profusion, its dishonour shade,
And, green thro' future times, shall bind thy brow;
While the vain honours of perfidious war
Wither abhor'd, or in oblivion lost:
With what prevailing vigour had they shot,
And stole a deeper root, by the full tide
Of war-sunk millions fed? Superior still,
How had they branch'd luxuriant to the skies,
In BRITAIN planted, by the potent juice
Of Freedom swell'd? Forc'd is the bloom of ARTS,
A false uncertain spring, when Bounty gives,
Weak without ME, a transitory gleam.
Fair shine the slippery days, enticing skies
Of favour smile, and courtly breezes blow;
Till ARTS, betray'd, trust to the flattering air
Their tender blossom: then malignant rise
The blights of Envy, of those insect-clouds,
That, blasting Merit, often cover Courts:
Nay, should, perchance, some kind MÆCENAS aid
The doubtful beamings of his PRINCE's soul,
His wav'ring ardor fix, and unconfin'd
Diffuse his warm beneficence around;
Yet death, at last, and wintry tyrants come,
Each sprig of Genius killing at the root.

* The tapestry of the *Gobelins*.

But when with ME IMPERIAL BOUNTY joins,
Wide o'er the public blows eternal spring;
While mingled autumn every harvest pours
Of every land; whate'er Invention, Art,
Creating Toil, and Nature, can produce.
Here ceas'd the GODDESS; and HER ardent wings,
Dipt in the colours of the heavenly bow,
Stood waving radiance round, for sudden flight
Prepar'd; when thus, impatient, burst my prayer.
" Oh forming light of life! O better sun!
" Sun of mankind! by whom the cloudy North
" Sublim'd, not envies *Languedocian* skies,
" That, unstain'd æther all, diffusive smile:
" *When shall we call these ancient laurels ours?*
" *And when* THY WORK *complete?*"—Straight with HER hand,
Celestial red, SHE touch'd my darken'd eyes.
As at the touch of day the shades dissolve,
So quick, methought, the misty circle clear'd,
That dims the dawn of being here below:
The future shone disclos'd, and, in long view,
Bright-rising æras instant rush'd to light.
" They come! GREAT GODDESS! I the TIMES behold!
" The TIMES our fathers, in the bloody field,
" Have earn'd so dear; and, not with less renown,
" In the warm struggles of the senate fight.
" The TIMES I see! whose glory to supply,
" For toiling ages, Commerce round the world
" Has wing'd unnumber'd sails, and from each land
" Materials heap'd, that, well-employed, with ROME
" Might vie our Grandeur, and with GREECE our Art.
" Lo! PRINCES I behold! contriving still,
" And still conducting firm some brave design;
" KINGS! that the narrow joyless circle scorn,

" Burst the blockade of false designing men,
" Of treacherous smiles, of adulation fell,
" And of the blinding clouds around them thrown:
" Their court rejoicing millions; Worth alone,
" And Virtue, dear to them; their best delight,
" In just proportion, to give general joy;
" Their jealous care THY KINGDOM to maintain;
" The public glory theirs; unsparing love
" Their endless treasure; and their deeds their praise.
" With THEE they work. Nought can resist YOUR force:
" Life feels it quickening in her dark retreats:
" Strong spread the blooms of Genius, Science, Art,
" His bashful bounds disclosing Merit breaks;
" And, big with fruits of Glory, Virtue blows
" Expansive o'er the land. Another race
" Of GENEROUS YOUTH, of PATRIOT-SIRES, I see!
" Not those vain insects fluttering in the blaze
" Of court, and ball, and play; those venal souls,
" Corruption's veteran unrelenting bands,
" That, to their vices slaves, can ne'er be free.
" I see the FOUNTAINS purg'd, whence life derives
" A clear or turbid flow; see the young mind
" Not fed impure by chance, by flattery fool'd,
" Or by scholastic jargon bloated proud,
" But fill'd and nourish'd by the light of truth;
" Then, beam'd thro' fancy the refining ray,
" And pouring on the heart, the passions feel
" At once informing light and moving flame;
" Till moral, public, graceful action crowns
" The whole. Behold! the fair contention glows,
" In all that mind or body can adorn,
" And form to life. Instead of barren heads,
" Barbarian pedants, wrangling sons of pride,

" And truth-perplexing metaphysic wits;
" Men, patriots, chiefs, and citizens, are form'd.
" Lo! JUSTICE, like the liberal light of Heaven,
" Unpurchas'd, shines on all; and from her beam,
" Appalling guilt, retire the savage crew
" That prowl amid the darkness they themselves
" Have thrown around the laws. Oppression grieves,
" See! how her legal Furies bite the lip,
" While YORKS and TALBOTS their deep snares detect,
" And seize swift justice thro' the clouds they raise.
" See! social LABOUR lifts his guarded head,
" And men not yield to government in vain.
" From the sure land is rooted ruffian force;
" And the lewd nurse of villains, idle waste;
" Lo! raz'd their haunts, down dash'd their maddening bowl,
" A nation's poison! Beauteous order reigns:
" Manly submission, unimposing toil,
" Trade without guile, civility that marks
" From the foul herd of brutal slaves THY sons,
" And fearless peace. Or should affronting war
" To slow but dreadful vengeance rouse the just,
" Unfailing fields of Freemen I behold!
" That know, with their own proper arm to guard
" Their own blest isle against a leaguing world.
" Despairing *Gaul* her boiling youth restrains,
" Dissolv'd her dream of universal Sway:
" The winds and seas are BRITAIN'S wide domain;
" And not a sail, but by permission, spreads.
" Lo! swarming southward on rejoicing suns,
" Gay COLONIES extend; the calm retreat
" Of undeserv'd distress; the better home
" Of those whom bigots chase from foreign lands.

" Not built on Rapine, Servitude, and Woe,
" And in their turn some petty tyrant's prey;
" But, bound by social Freedom, firm they rise;
" Such as, of late, an OGLETHORPE has form'd,
" And, crowding round, the charm'd Savannah sees
" Horrid with want and misery, no more
" Our streets the tender passenger afflict:
" Nor shivering age, nor sickness without friend,
" Or home, or bed to bear his burning load;
" Nor agonizing infant, that ne'er earn'd
" Its guiltless pangs, I see! The stores, profuse,
" Which *British* bounty has to these assign'd,
" No more the sacrilegious riot swell
" Of cannibal devourers! Right apply'd,
" No starving wretch the land of Freedom stains:
" If poor, employment finds; if old, demands,
" If sick, if maim'd, his miserable due;
" And will, if young, repay the fondest care.
" Sweet sets the sun of stormy life, and sweet
" The morning shines, in Mercy's dews array'd.
" Lo! how they rise! THESE FAMILIES OF HEAVEN!
" That, chief, (but why—ye Bigots!—why so late?)
" Where blooms and warbles glad a rising age *:
" What smiles of praise! And, while their song ascends,
" The listening seraph lays his lute aside.
" Hark! the gay MUSES raise a nobler strain
" With active Nature, warm impassion'd truth,
" Engaging fable, lucid order, notes
" Of various string, and heart-felt image fill'd.
" Behold! I see the dread delightful School
" Of temper'd Passions, and of polish'd Life,
" Restor'd: behold! the well-dissembled scene

* An hospital for Foundlings.

" Calls from embellished eyes the lovely tear,
" Or lights up mirth in modest cheeks again.
" Lo! vanish'd Monster-land.—Lo! driven away
" Those that *Apollo*'s sacred walks profane:
" Their wild creation scatter'd, where a world
" Unknown to Nature, Chaos more confus'd,
" O'er the brute scene its *Ouran-Outangs** pours;
" Detested forms! that, on the mind imprest,
" Corrupt, confound, and barbarize an age.
" Behold! all thine again the SISTER-ARTS,
" Thy Graces they, knit in harmonious dance.
" Nurs'd by the treasure from a nation drain'd
" Their works to purchase, they to nobler rouse
" Their untam'd genius, their unfetter'd thought;
" Of pompous tyrants, and of dreaming monks,
" The gaudy tools, and prisoners, no more.
" Lo! numerous DOMES a BURLINGTON confess:
" For Kings and Senates fit, the Palace see!
" The Temple breathing a religious awe;
" Even fram'd with elegance the plain Retreat,
" The private dwelling. Certain in his aim,
" Taste, never idly working, saves expence.
" See! SYLVAN SCENES, where Art, alone, pretends
" To dress her Mistress, and disclose her charms:
" Such as a POPE in miniature has shewn;
" A BATHURST o'er the widening forest† spreads;
" And such as form a RICHMOND, CHISWICK, STOWE.
" August, around, what PUBLIC WORKS I see!
" Lo! stately streets, lo! Squares that court the breeze,
" In spite of those to whom pertains the care:

* A creature which, of all brutes, most resembles man.—See Dr. *Tyson*'s treatise on this animal.

† *Okely* woods, near *Cirencester*.

" Ingulphing more that founded *Roman* ways,
" Lo! ray'd from cities o'er the brighten'd land,
" Connecting sea to sea, the solid Road.
" Lo! the proud Arch (no vile exactor's stand)
" With easy sweep bestrides the chafing flood.
" See! long Canals, and deepened Rivers join
" Each part with each, and with the circling main
" The whole enliven'd isle. Lo! Ports expand,
" Free as the winds and waves, their sheltering arms.
" Lo! streaming comfort o'er the troubled deep,
" On every pointed coast the Light-house tow'rs:
" And, by the broad imperious Mole repell'd,
" Hark! how the baffled storm indignant roars."
As thick to view THESE VARIED WONDERS rose,
Shook all my soul with transport, unassur'd,
The VISION broke; and, on my waking eye,
Rush'd the still RUINS of dejected ROME.

SOPHONISBA;

A

TRAGEDY.

TO THE

QUEEN.

MADAM,

THE notice your MAJESTY has condescended to take of the following *Tragedy*, emboldens me to lay it, in the humblest manner, at your MAJESTY's feet. And to whom can this illustrious *Carthaginian* so properly fly for protection, as to a QUEEN, who commands the hearts of a *people* more powerful at sea than *Carthage*; more flourishing in *commerce* than those *first merchants*; more secure against conquest; and, under a *Monarchy*, more free than a *Commonwealth* itself?

I dare not, nor indeed need I, here attempt a character where both the great and the amiable qualities shine forth in full perfection. All words are faint to speak what is universally felt, and acknowledged, by a happy people. Permit me therefore only to subscribe myself, with the truest zeal and veneration,

MADAM,

Your MAJESTY's

Most humble, most dutiful, and

Most devoted Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

PREFACE.

IT is not my intention, in this preface, to defend any faults that may be found in the following piece. I am afraid there are too many; but those who are best able to discover, will be most ready to pardon them. They alone know how difficult an undertaking the writing of a tragedy is: and this is a first attempt.

I beg leave only to mention the reason that determined me to make choice of this subject. What pleased me particularly, though perhaps it will not be least liable to objection with ordinary readers, was the great simplicity of the story. It is one, regular, and uniform, not charged with a multiplicity of incidents, and yet affording several revolutions of fortune; by which the passions may be excited, varied, and driven to their full tumult of emotion.

This unity of design was always sought after, and admired by the Ancients: and the most eminent among the Moderns, who understood their writings, have chosen to imitate them in this, from an entire conviction that the reason of it must hold good in all ages. And here allow me to translate a Passage from the celebrated *Monsieur Racine*, which contains all that I have to say on this head.

" We must not fancy that this rule has no other " foundation but the caprice of those who made it. " Nothing can touch us in tragedy but what is pro- " bable; and what probability is there, that, in one " day, should happen a multitude of things, which " could scarce happen in several weeks? There are " some who think that this simplicity is a mark of bar- " renness of invention. But they do not consider, that, " on the contrary, invention consists of making some- " thing out of nothing: and that this huddle of incidents " has always been the refuge of Poets, who did not find " in their genius either richness or force enough to en- " gage their spectators for five acts together, by a simple " action, supported by the violence of passions, the " beauty of sentiments, and the nobleness of expres- " sion."—I would not be understood to mean, that all these things are to be found in my performance: I only shew the reader what I aimed at, and how I would have pleased him, had it been in my power.

As to the character of *Sophonisba;* in drawing it, I have confined myself to the truth of history. It were an affront to the age, to suppose such a character out of nature; especially in a country which has produced so many great examples of public spirit and heroic virtues, even in the softer sex: and I had destroyed her character entirely, had I not marked it with that strong love to her country, disdain of servitude, and inborn aversion to the *Romans*, by which all historians have distinguished her. Nor ought her marrying *Masinissa*, while her former husband was still alive, to be reckoned a blemish in her character. For, by the laws of *Rome* and *Carthage*, the captivity of the husband dissolved the marriage of course; as among us, impotence, or adultery; not to mention the reasons of a moral and public nature, which

I have put into her own mouth, in the scene betwixt her and *Syphax*.

This is all I have to say of the play itself. But I cannot conclude without owning my obligations to those concerned in the representation. They have indeed done me more than justice. Whatever was designed as aimable and engaging in *Masinissa*, shines out in Mr. *Wilks*'s action. Mrs. *Oldfield*, in the character of *Sophonisba*, has excelled what, even in the fondness of an author, I could either wish or imagine. The grace, dignity, and happy variety of her action, have been universally applauded, and are truly admirable.

PROLOGUE.

BY A FRIEND.

SPOKEN BY MR. WILLIAMS.

WHEN Learning, after the long Gothic night,
Fair, o'er the western world, renew'd its light,
With arts arising, Sophonisba rose;
The tragic muse, returning, wept her woes.
With her th' Italian scene first learn'd to glow;
And the first tears for her were taught to flow.
Her charms the Gallic muses next inspir'd;
Corneille himself saw, wonder'd, and was fir'd.
What foreign theatres with pride have shewn,
Britain, by juster title, makes her own.
When Freedom is the cause, 'tis hers to fight:
And hers, when Freedom is the theme, to write.
For this a *British Author* bids again
The heroine rise, to grace the British scene.
Here, as in life, she breathes her genuine flame:
She asks what bosom has not felt the same?
Asks of the *British Youth*—Is silence there?
She dares to ask it of the *British Fair*.
To-night, our home-spun author would be true,
At once, to nature, history, and you;
Well-pleas'd to give our neighbours due applause,
He owns their learning, but disdains their laws.
Not to his patient touch, or happy flame,
'Tis to his British heart he trusts for fame.
If France excel him in one free-born thought,
The man, as well as poet, is in fault.
Nature! informer of the poet's art,
Whose force alone can raise or melt the heart,
Thou art his guide; each passion, every line,
Whate'er he draws to please, must all be thine:
Be thou his judge; in every candid breast,
Thy silent whisper is the sacred test.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Masinissa, King of Massylia,	Mr. Wilks.
Syphax, King of Massæsylia,	Mr. Mills.
Narva, Friend to Masinissa,	Mr. Roberts.
Scipio, the Roman General,	Mr. Williams.
Lælius, his Lieutenant, -	Mr. Bridgwater.
Sophonisba, - - - -	Mrs. Oldfield.
Phoenissa, her Friend, - -	Mrs. Roberts.

Messenger, Slave, Guards, and Attendants.

SCENE, the Palace of Cirtha.

SOPHONISBA;

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

THIS hour, Phœnissa, this important hour,
Or fixes me a queen, or from a throne
Throws Sophonisba into Roman chains.
Detested thought! For now his utmost force
Collected, desperate, distress'd, and sore
From battles lost; with all the rage of war,
Ill-fated Syphax his last effort makes.
But say, thou partner of my hopes and fears,
Phœnissa, say; while from the lofty tower,
Our straining eyes the field of battle sought,
Ah! thought you not that our Numidian troops
Gave up the bloody field, and scattering fled,
Wild o'er the hills, from the rapacious sons
Of still triumphant Rome?

PHOENISSA.

Perhaps they wheel'd,
As is their custom, to return more fierce.
Distrust not Fortune, while you yet may hope;
And think not, Madam, Syphax can resign,
But with his ebbing life, in this last field,
At once a kingdom, and a queen he loves
Beyond ambition's brightest wish: for whom,
Nor mov'd by threats, nor bound by plighted faith,
He scorn'd the Roman friendship (that fair name
For slavery), and from th' engagements broke
Of Scipio, fam'd for every winning art,
The towering Genius of recovered Rome.

SOPHONISBA.

Oh name him not! These Romans stir my blood
To too much rage. I cannot bear the fortune
Of that proud people.—Said you not, Phœnissa,
That Syphax lov'd me; which would fire his soul,
And urge him on to death or conquest?—True,
He loves me with the madness of desire;
His every passion is a slave to love;
Nor heeds he danger where I bid him go,
Nor leagues, nor interest. Hence these endless wars,
These ravag'd countries, these successless fights,
Sustain'd for Carthage; whose defence alone,
Not love, engag'd my marriage-vows with his.
But know you not, that in the Roman camp
I have a lover too; a gallant, brave,
And disappointed lover, full of wrath,
Returning to a kingdom, whence the sword
Of Syphax drove him?

PHOENISSA.

Masinissa?

SOPHONISBA.

He:

Young Masinissa, the Massylian king,
The first addresser of my youth; for whom
My bosom felt a fond beginning wish,
Extinguish'd soon, when once by Scipio's arts
Won over, he became the slave of Rome.
E'er since, my heart has held him in contempt;
And thrown out each idea of his worth,
That there began to grow: nay had it been
As much enthrall'd and soft as her's who sits
In secret shades, or by the falling stream,
And wastes her being in unutter'd pangs,
I would have broke, or cur'd it of its fondness.

PHOENISSA.

Heroic Sophonisba!

SOPHONISBA.

No, Phœnissa;
It is not for the daughter of great Asdrubal,
Descended from a long illustrious line
Of Carthaginian heroes, who have oft
Fill'd Italy with terror and dismay,
And shook the walls of Rome, to pine in love,
Like a deluded maid; to give her life,
And heart high-beating in her country's cause,
To mean domestic cares, and idle joys;
Much less to one who stoops his neck to Rome,
An enemy to Carthage—Masinissa.

PHOENISSA.

Think not I mean to check that glorious flame,
That just ambition which exalts your soul,
Glows on your cheek, and lightens in your eye.
Yet would he had been yours, this rising prince!
For, trust me, Fame is fond of Masinissa.

His courage, conduct, deep-experienc'd youth,
And vast unbroken spirit in distress,
Still rising stronger from the last defeat,
Are all the talk, and terror too, of Afric.
Who has not heard the story of his woes?
How hard he came to his paternal realm:
Whence soon by Syphax' unrelenting hate,
And jealous Carthage driven, he with a few
Fled to the mountains. Then, I think, it was,
Hemm'd in a circle of impending rocks,
That all his followers fell, save fifty horse,
Who, thence escap'd thro' secret paths abrupt,
Gain'd the Clupean plain. There overtook,
And urg'd by fierce surrounding foes, he burst
With four alone, sore wounded, thro' their ranks,
And all amidst a deep-swoln torrent plung'd.
Seiz'd with the whirling gulph, two sunk; and two,
With him obliquely hurried down the stream,
Swam to the farther shore. Th' astonish'd foes
Stood check'd and shivering on the gloomy brink,
And deem'd him lost in the devouring flood.
Mean-time, the dauntless undespairing youth
Lay in a cave conceal'd; curing his wounds
With mountain herbs, and on his horses fed.
Nor here, even at the lowest ebb of life,
Stoop'd his aspiring mind. What need I say,
How once again restor'd, and once again
Expell'd, among the Garamantian hills
He since has wander'd, till the Roman arm
Reviv'd his cause? and who shall reign alone,
Syphax or he, this day decides.

SOPHONISBA.

Enough.
Thou need'st not blazon thus his fame, Phœnissa:

Were he as glorious as the pride of woman
Could wish, in all her wantonness of thought;
The joy of human-kind; wise, valiant, good;
With every praise, with every laurel crown'd;
The warrior's wonder, and the virgin's sigh:
Yet this would cloud him o'er, this blemish all,
His mean submission to the Roman yoke;
That, false to Carthage, Afric, and himself,
With proffer'd hand and knee, he hither led
These ravagers of earth.—But while we talk,
The work of Fate goes on; even now perhaps
My dying country bleeds in every vein,
And the proud victor thunders at our gate.

SCENE II.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA, *and to them a* MESSENGER *from the battle.*

SOPHONISBA.

Ha! whence art thou? Speak; tho' thy bleeding wounds
Might well excuse thy tongue.

MESSENGER.

Madam, escap'd
From yon dire field, alas! I come——

SOPHONISBA.

No more.
At once thy meaning flashes o'er my soul.
Oh all my vanish'd hopes! oh fatal chance
Of undiscerning war! And is all lost?—
An universal ruin?

MESSENGER.

Madam, all.
Of all our numerous host, scarce one is sav'd.
The King——

SOPHONISBA.

Ah! what of him?

MESSENGER.

His fiery steed,
By Masinissa, the Massylian prince,
Pierc'd, threw him headlong to his clustering foes:
And now he comes in chains.

SOPHONISBA.

O worst of ills!
Absolute gods! All Afric is in chains!
The weeping world in chains!—Oh is there not
A time, a righteous time, reserv'd in fate,
When these oppressors of mankind shall feel
The miseries they give; and blindly fight
For their own fetters too?—The conquering troops,
How points their motion?

MESSENGER.

At my heels they came,
Loud-shouting, dreadful in a cloud of dust,
By Masinissa headed.

SOPHONISBA.

Hark! arriv'd:
The murmuring cloud rolls frighted to the palace.—
Thou bleed'st to death, poor faithful wretch; away,
And dress thy wounds, if life be worth thy care;
Tho' Rome, methinks, will lose a slave in thee.
Would Sophonisba were as near the verge
Of boundless, and immortal liberty!

SCENE III.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

[*After a pause.*]

SOPHONISBA.

And wherefore not? When liberty is lost,
Let abject cowards live; but in the brave
It were a treachery to themselves, enough
To merit chains. And is it fit for me,
Who in my veins, from Asdrubal deriv'd,
Hold Carthaginian enmity to Rome;
Who sold my joyless youth to Syphax' arms,
For her destruction; is it fit for me
To sit in feeble grief, and trembling wait
Th' approaching victor's rage? reserv'd in chains
To grace his triumph, and become the scorn
Of every Roman dame?—Gods! how my soul
Disdains the thought! This, this shall set it free.

[*Offers to stab herself.*]

PHOENISSA.

Hold, Sophonisba, hold! my friend! my queen!
For whom alone I live! hold your rash hand,
Nor thro' your guardian bosom stab your country.
This is our last resort, and always sure.
The gracious gods are liberal of death;
To that last blessing lend a thousand ways.
Think not I'd have you live to drag a chain,
And walk the triumph of insulting Rome.
No, by these tears of loyalty and love!
Ere I beheld so vile a sight, this hand
Should urge the faithful poniard to your heart,
And glory in the deed. But, while hope lives,

Let not the generous die. 'Tis late before
The brave despair.

SOPHONISBA.

Thou copy of my soul!
And now my friend indeed! Shew me but hope,
One glimpse of hope, and I'll renew my toils;
Call patience, labour, fortitude again,
The vext unjoyous day, and sleepless night;
Nor shrink at danger, any shape of death:
Shew me the smallest hope! Alas, Phœnissa,
Too fondly confident! Hope lives not here,
Fled with her sister Liberty beyond
The Garamantian hills, to some steep wild,
Some undiscover'd country, where the foot
Of Roman cannot come.

PHOENISSA.

Yes, there she liv'd
With Masinissa wounded and forlorn,
Amidst the serpent's hiss, and tyger's yell.——

SOPHONISBA.

Why nam'st thou him?

PHOENISSA.

Madam, in this forgive
My forward zeal; from him proceeds our hope.
He lov'd you once; nor is your form impair'd,
Time has matur'd it into stronger charms:
Ask his protection from the Roman power:
You must prevail; for Sophonisba sure
From Masinissa cannot ask in vain.

SOPHONISBA.

Now, by the prompting Genius of my country!
I thank thee for the thought. True, there is pain

Even in descending thus to beg protection
From that degenerate youth. But, oh! for thee,
My sinking country, and again to gaul
This hated Rome, what would I not endure?
It shall be done, Phœnissa; tho' disgust
Hold back my struggling heart, it shall be done.—
But hark; they come; in this disordered tumult
It fits not Sophonisba to be seen.
I'll wait a calmer hour.—Let us retire.

SCENE IV.

MASINISSA, SYPHAX *in chains*, NARVA, *Guards*, &c.

SYPHAX.

Is there no dungeon in this city, dark
As is my troubled soul? That thus I am brought
To my own palace; to those rooms of state,
Wont in another manner to receive me,
With other signs of royalty than these.
[*Looking on his chains.*]

MASINISSA.

I will not wound thee, nor insult thee, Syphax,
With a recital of thy tyrant crimes.
A captive here I see thee, fallen below
My most revengeful wish; and all the rage,
The noble fury that this morn inflam'd me,
Is sunk to soft compassion. In the field,
The perilous front of war, there is the scene
Of brave revenge: and I have sought thee there,
Keen as the wounded lion seeks his foe.
But when a broken enemy, disarm'd,
And helpless lies; a falling sword, an eye

With pity flowing, and an arm as weak
As infant softness, then becomes the brave.
Believe it, Syphax, my relenting soul
Melts at thy fate.

SYPHAX.

This, this, is all I dread,
All I detest; this insolence refin'd,
This affectation of superior goodness.
Pitied by thee!—Is there a form of death,
Of torture, and of infamy like that?
Ye partial gods, to what have you debas'd me?
I feel your worst; why should I fear you more?
Hear me, vain youth! take notice—I abhor
Thy mercy, loath it.—Use me like a slave;
As I would thee, (delicious thought!) wert thou
Here crouching in my power.

MASINISSA.

Outrageous man!
Thou can'st not drive me, by thy bitterest rage,
To an unmanly deed; not all thy wrongs
Can force my patient soul to stain its virtue.

SYPHAX.

I cannot wrong thee. When we drive the spear
Into the monster's heart, or crush the serpent,
Can that be call'd a wrong? 'Tis self-defence.

MASINISSA.

I'm loth to hurt thee more.—The tyrant works
Too fierce already in thy rankled breast.
But since thou seem'st to rank me with thyself,
With great destroyers, with perfidious kings;
I must reply to thy licentious tongue;
Bid thee remember, who accursed sword
Began this work of death; who broke the ties,

The holy ties, attested by the gods,
Which bind the nations in the bond of peace;
Who meanly took advantage of my youth,
Unskill'd in arms, unsettled on my throne,
And drove me to the desert, there to dwell
With kinder monsters; who my cities sack'd,
My country pillag'd, and my subjects murder'd;
Who still pursu'd me with inveterate hate;
When open force prov'd vain, with ruffian arts,
The villain's dagger, base assassination.
And for no reason all. Brute violence
Alone thy plea.—What the least provocation,
Say, canst thou but pretend?

SYPHAX.

I needed none.
Nature has in my being sown the seeds
Of enmity to thine.—Nay mark me this;
Couldst thou restore me to my former state,
Strike off these chains, give me my crown again;
Yet must I still, implacable to thee,
Seek eagerly thy death, or die myself.
Life cannot hold us both!—Unequal gods!
Who love to disappoint mankind, and take
All vengeance to yourselves; why to the point
Of my long-flatter'd wishes did ye lift me;
Then sink me down so low? Just as I aim'd
The glorious stroke that was to make me happy,
Why did you blast my strong-extended arm?
But that to mock us is your cruel sport?
What else is human life?

MASINISSA.

Thus always join'd
With an inhuman heart, and brutal manners,

Is irreligion to the ruling gods;
Whose schemes our peevish ignorance arraigns,
Our thoughtless pride.—Thy lost condition, Syphax,
Is nothing to the tumult of thy breast.
There lies the sting of evil, there the drop
That poisons nature.—Ye mysterious powers!
Whose ways are ever-gracious, ever-just,
As ye think wisest, best, dispose of me;
But, whether thro' your gloomy depths I wander,
Or on your mountains walk; give me the calm,
The steady, smiling soul; where wisdom sheds
Eternal sunshine and eternal peace.
Then, if Misfortune comes, she brings along
The bravest virtues. And so many great
Illustrious spirits have convers'd with woe,
Have in her school been taught, as are enough
To consecrate distress, and make Ambition
Even wish the frown beyond the smile of Fortune.

SYPHAX.

Torture and racks! This is the common trick
Of insolent success, unsuffering pride;
This prate of patience, and I know not what:
'Tis all a lie, impracticable rant;
And only tends to make me scorn thee more.
But why this talk? In mercy send me hence;
Yet—ere I go—Oh save me from distraction!
I know, hot youth, thou burnest for my queen;
But by the majesty of ruin'd kings,
And that commanding glory which surrounds her,
I charge thee touch her not!

MASINISSA.

No, Syphax, no.
Thou need'st not charge me. That were mean indeed,

A triumph that to thee. But could I stoop
Again to love her; Thou, what right hast thou,
A captive, to her bed? Thy bonds divorce
And free her from thy power. All laws in this,
Roman and Carthaginian, all agree.

SYPHAX.

Here, here, begins the bitterness of ruin;
Here my chains grind me first!

MASINISSA.

Poor Sophonisba!
She too becomes the prize of conquering Rome;
What most her heart abhors. Alas, how hard
Will slavery sit on her exalted soul!
She never will endure it, she will die.
For not a Roman burns with nobler ardor,
A higher sense of liberty than she;
And tho' she marry'd thee, her only stain,
False to my youth, and faithless to her vows,
Yet, I must own it, from a worthy cause,
From public spirit, did her fault proceed.

SYPHAX.

Must I then hear her praise from thee? Confusion!
Oh! for a lonely dungeon! where I rather
Would talk with my own groans, and breathe revenge,
Than in the mansions of the bless'd with thee.
Hell! Whither must I go?

MASINISSA.

Unhappy man!
And is thy breast determin'd against peace,
On comfort shut?

SYPHAX.

On all, but death, from thee.

MASINISSA.

Narva, be Syphax thy peculiar care;
And use him well, with tenderness and honour:
This evening Lælius, and to-morrow Scipio,
To Cirtha comes. Then let the Romans take
Their prisoner.

SYPHAX.

There shines a gleam of hope
Across the gloom.—From thee deliver'd!—Ease
Breathes in that thought—Lead on—My heart grows
lighter!

SCENE V.

MASINISSA.

What dreadful havock in the human breast
The passions make, when unconfin'd, and mad,
They burst, unguided by the mental eye,
The light of reason, which in various ways
Points them to good, or turns them back from ill!
O save me from the tumult of the soul!
From the wild beasts within!—For circling sands,
When the swift whirlwind whelms them o'er the lands;
The roaring deeps that to the clouds arise,
While through the storm the darting lightning flies;
The monster-brood to which this land gives birth,
The blazing city, and the gaping earth;
All deaths, all tortures, in one pang combin'd,
Are gentle, to the tempest of the mind.

ACT II. SCENE I.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

THOU good old man, by whom my youth was form'd,
The firm companion of my various life,
I own, 'tis true, that Sophonisba's image
Lives in my bosom still; and at each glance
I take in secret of the bright idea,
A strange disorder seizes on my soul,
Which burns with stronger glory. Need I say,
How once she had my vows? Till Scipio came,
(Resistless man!) like a descending god,
And snatch'd me from the Carthaginian side,
To nobler Rome; beneath whose laurel'd brow,
And fav'ring eye, the nations grow polite,
Humane, and happy. Then thou may'st remember,
Such is this woman's high impetuous spirit,
That all-controuling love she bears her country,
Her Carthage; that for this she sacrific'd
To Syphax, unbelov'd, her blooming years,
And won him off from Rome.

NARVA.

My generous prince!
Applauding Afric of thy choice approves:
Fame claps her wings, and virtue smiles on thee;
Of peace thou softner, and thou soul of war!
But, oh! beware of that fair foe to glory,
Woman! and most, of Carthaginian woman!
Who has not heard of fatal Punic guile?

Of their stol'n conquests? their insidious leagues?
Their Asdrubals? their Hannibals? with all
Their wily heroes? And, if such their men,
What must their women be?

MASINISSA.

You make me smile.
I thank thy honest zeal. But never dread
The firmness of my heart; the strong attachment
I hold to Rome, to Scipio, and to glory.
Indeed, I cannot, would not quite forget
The grace of Sophonisba; how she look'd,
And talk'd, and mov'd, a Pallas or a Juno!
Accomplish'd even in trifles, when she stoop'd
From higher thoughts, and with a soften'd eye,
Gave her quick spirit into gayer life:
Then every word was liveliness and wit;
We heard the Muses' song; and the dance swam
Thro' all the maze of harmony. Believe me,
I do not flatter; yet my panting soul
To Scipio's friendship, to the fair pursuit
Of fame, and for my people's happiness,
Resign'd this Sophonisba; and tho' now
Constrain'd by sweet necessity to see her
A captive in my power, yet will I still
Resign her.

NARVA.

I'll not doubt thy fortitude,
My Masinissa, thy exalted purpose
Not to be lost in love; but ah! we know not
Oft, till experience sighs it to the soul,
The boundless witchcraft of ensnaring woman,
And our own slippery hearts. From Scipio learn
The temperance of heroes. I'll recount

Th' instructive story, what these eyes beheld:
Perhaps you've heard it; but 'tis pleasing still,
Tho' told a thousand times.

MASINISSA.

I burn to hear it.
Lost by my late misfortunes in the desert,
I liv'd a stranger to the voice of Fame,
To Scipio's last exploits. Indulge me now.
Great actions, even recounted, raise the mind;
But when a friend has done them, then, my Narva,
They doubly charm us; then with more that wonder,
Even with a sort of vanity, we listen.

NARVA.

When to his glorious first essay in war,
New Carthage fell; there all the flower of Spain
Were kept in hostage; a full field presenting
For Scipio's generosity to shine.
And then it was, that when the hero heard
How I to thee belong'd, he with large gifts,
And friendly words, dismiss'd me.

MASINISSA.

I remember;
And in his favour That engag'd me first.
But to thy story.

NARVA.

What with admiration
Struck every heart, was this:—A noble virgin,
Conspicuous far o'er all the captive dames,
Was mark'd the general's prize. She wept, and blush'd,
Young, fresh, and blooming like the morn. An eye,
As when the blue sky trembles through a cloud
Of purest white. A secret charm combin'd

Her features, and infus'd enchantment thro' them.
Her shape was harmony.—But eloquence
Beneath her beauty fails: which seem'd on purpose,
By Nature lavish'd on her, that mankind
Might see the virtue of a hero tried
Almost beyond the stretch of human force.
Soft as she past along, with downcast eyes,
Where gentle sorrow swell'd, and now and then
Dropt o'er her modest cheek a trickling tear,
The Roman legions languish'd; and hard war
Felt more than pity. Even their chief himself,
As on his high tribunal rais'd he sat,
Turn'd from the dangerous sight, and chiding ask'd
His officers, if by this gift they meant
To cloud his glory in its very dawn.

MASINISSA.

Oh Gods! my fluttering heart! On; stop not, Narva.

NARVA.

She, question'd of her birth, in trembling accents,
With tears and blushes broken, told her tale.
But when he found her royally descended,
Of her old captive parents the sole joy;
And that a hapless Celtiberian prince,
Her lover, and belov'd, forgot his chains,
His lost dominions, and for her alone
Wept out his tender soul; sudden the heart
Of this young, conquering, loving, godlike Roman,
Felt all the great divinity of virtue.
His wishing youth stood check'd, his tempting power
Restrain'd by kind humanity.—At once
He for her parents and her lover call'd.—
The various scene imagine: how his troops

Look'd dubious on, and wonder'd what he meant:
While, stretch'd below, the trembling suppliants lay,
Rack'd by a thousand mingling passions; fear,
Hope, jealousy, disdain, submission, grief,
Anxiety, and love in every shape:
To these as different sentiments succeeded,
As mixt emotions, when the man divine
Thus the dread silence to the lover broke:
" We both are young, both charm'd. The right of war
" Has put thy beauteous mistress in my power;
" With whom I could, in the most sacred ties,
" Live out a happy life; but know that Romans
" Their hearts as well as enemies can conquer.
" Then take her to thy soul; and with her take
" Thy liberty and kingdom. In return
" I ask but this. When you behold these eyes,
" These charms, with transport; be a friend to Rome."

MASINISSA.

There spoke the soul of Scipio.—But the Lovers?

NARVA.

Joy and extatic wonder held them mute;
While the loud camp, and all the clust'ring crowd
That hung around, rang with repeated shouts.
Fame took th' alarm, and thro' resounding Spain
Blew fast the fair report; which, more than arms,
Admiring nations to the Romans gain'd.

MASINISSA.

My friend in glory! thy awaken'd prince
Springs at thy noble tale. It fires my soul,
And nerves each thought anew; apt oft, perhaps
Too much, too much, to slacken into love.
But now the soft oppression flies; and all

My mounting powers expand to deeds like these.
Who, who would live, my Narva, just to breathe
This idle air, and indolently run,
Day after day, the still-returning round
Of life's mean offices, and sickly joys;
But, in the service of mankind, to be
A guardian god below:—Still to employ
The mind's brave ardor in heroic aims,
Such as may raise us o'er the groveling herd,
And make us shine for ever?—That is life.
Bleed every vein about me; every nerve
With anguish tremble; every sinew ake;
The third time may I lose my crown; again
Wander the false inhospitable Syrts;
If, to reward my toils, the gods will grant me
To share the wreath of fame on Scipio's brow.
But see, she comes, the beauteous Sophonisba!
Behold, my friend, mark her majestic port!

SCENE II.

MASINISSA, SOPHONISBA, NARVA, PHOENISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

Behold, victorious prince! the scene revers'd;
And Sophonisba kneeling here; a captive,
O'er whom the gods, thy fortune, and thy virtue,
Give thee unquestion'd power of life and death.
If such a one may raise her suppliant voice,
Once music to thy ear; if she may touch
Thy knee, thy purple, and thy victor-hand;
Oh listen, Masinissa! Let thy soul
Intensely listen; while I fervent pray,

And strong adjure thee, by that regal state,
In which with equal pomp we lately shone;
By the Numidian name, our common boast;
And by those household gods (who may, I wish,
With better omens take thee to this palace,
Than Syphax hence they sent); as is thy pleasure,
In all beside determine of my fate;
This, this alone I beg: never, oh never!
Into the cruel, proud, and hated power
Of Romans let me fall. Since angry Heaven
Will have it so, that I must be a slave,
And that a galling chain must bind these hands,
It were some little softning in my doom,
To call a kindred son of the same clime,
A native of Numidia, my lord.
But if thou can'st not save me from the Romans,
If this sad favour be beyond thy power;
At least to give me death is what thou canst:—
Here strike—my naked bosom courts thy sword;
And my last breath shall bless thee, Masinissa!

MASINISSA.

Rise, Sophonisba, rise. To see thee thus
Is a revenge I scorn; and all the man
Within me, though much injur'd by thy pride,
And spirit too tempestuous for thy sex,
Yet blushes to behold thus at my feet,
Thus prostrate low, her for whom kings have kneel'd;
The fairest, but the falsest of her sex.

SOPHONISBA.

Spare thy reproach.—'Tis cruel thus to lose,
In rankling discord, and ungenerous strife,
The few remaining moments that divide me

From the most loath'd of evils, Roman bondage!—
Yes, shut thy heart against me; shut thy heart
Against compassion, every human thought,
Even recollected love: yet know, rash youth!
That when thou seest me swell their lofty triumph,
Thou seest thyself in me. This is my day;
To-morrow will be thine. But here, be sure,
Here will I lie on this vile earth, forlorn,
Of hope abandon'd, since despis'd by thee;
These locks all loose and sordid in the dust;
This sullied bosom growing to the ground;
Till the remorseless soldier comes, more fierce
From recent blood; and, in thy very eye,
Lays raging his rude sanguinary grasp
On these weak limbs, and tortures them with chains.
Then if no friendly steel, no nectar'd draught
Of deedly poison, can enlarge my soul;
It will indignant burst from a slave's body,
And, join'd to mighty Dido, scorn ye all.

MASINISSA.

Oh, Sophonisba! 'tis not safe to hear thee;
And I mistook my heart, to trust it thus.
Hence let me fly.

SOPHONISBA.

You shall not, Masinissa!
Here will I hold you, tremble here for ever;
Here unremitting grow, till you consent.
And canst thou think, oh! canst thou think to leave me,
Expos'd, defenceless, wretched, here alone,
A prey to Romans flush'd with blood and conquest,
The subject of their scorn, or baser love?
Sure Masinissa cannot: and, tho' chang'd,
Tho' cold as that averted look he wears,

Sure love can ne'er in generous breasts be lost
To that degree, as not from shame and outrage
To save what once they lov'd.

MASINISSA.

Enchantment! madness!—
What would'st thou, Sophonisba?—Oh my heart!
My treacherous heart!

SOPHONISBA.

What would I, Masinissa?—
My mean request sits blushing on my cheek.
To be thy slave, young prince, is what I beg;
Here Sophonisba kneels to be thy slave;
Yet kneels in vain.—But thou'rt a slave thyself,
And canst not from the Romans save one woman;
Her who was once the triumph of thy soul,
Ere they seduc'd it by their lying glory.
Immortal gods! and am I fallen so low?
Scorn'd by a lover? by the man whom once
My heart, alas! too much inclin'd to love,
Before he sunk into the slave of Rome?—
Nought can be worth this baseness, life nor empire.
I loath me for it.—On this kinder earth
Then leave me, leave me to despair and death!

MASINISSA.

I cannot bear her tears.—Rise, quickly rise;
In all the conquering majesty of charms,
O Sophonisba! rise; while here I swear,
By the tremendous powers that rule mankind!
By heaven, and earth, and hell! by love and glory!
The Romans shall not hurt you—Romans cannot;
For Rome is generous as the gods themselves;
And honours, not insults, a generous foe.

Yet, since you dread them, take this royal hand,
The pledge of surety, by which kings are bound;
By which I hold you mine, and vow to treat you,
With all the softness of remember'd love,
All that can soothe thy fate, and make thee happy.

SOPHONISBA.

I thank thee, Masinissa: now the same,
The same bright youth, exalted, full of soul,
With whom, in happier days, I us'd to pass
The tender hour; while, dawning fair in love,
All song and sweetness, life set joyous out;
Ere the black tempest of ambition rose,
And drove us different ways.—Thus dress'd in war,
In nodding plumes, o'ercast with sullen thought,
With purpos'd vengeance dark, I knew thee not;
But now breaks out the beauteous sun anew,
The gay Numidian shines, who warm'd me once,
Whose love was glory.—Vain ideas, hence!
Long since, my heart, to nobler passions known,
Has your acquaintance scorn'd.

MASINISSA.

Oh! while you talk,
Enchanting fair one! my deluded thought
Runs back to days of love; when fancy still
Found worlds of beauty, ever rising new
To the transported eye: when flattering hope
Form'd endless prospects of increasing bliss;
And still the credulous heart believ'd them all,
Even more than love could promise.—But the scene
Is full of danger for a youthful eye;
I must not, dare not, will not look that way:
O hide it, wisdom, glory, from my view!
Or in sweet ruin I shall sink again.

Distemper clouds thy cheek; thy colour goes.—
Retire, and from the troubles of the day
Repose thy weary soul, worn out with care,
And rough unhappy thought.

SOPHONISBA.

May Masinissa
Ne'er want the goodness he has shewn to me.

SCENE III.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

The danger's o'er; I've heard the Syren's song;
Yet still to virtue hold my steady course.
I mark'd thy kind concern, thy friendly fears,
And own them just; for she has beauty, Narva,
So full, so perfect, with so great a soul
Inform'd, so rais'd with animating spirit,
As strikes like lightning from the hand of Jove,
And raises love to glory.

NARVA.

Ah, my Prince!
Too true, it is too true; her fatal charms
Are powerful, and to Masinissa's heart
Know but too well the way. And art thou sure,
That the soft poison, which within thy veins
Lay unextinguish'd, is not rous'd anew,
Is not this moment working thro' thy soul?
Dost thou not love?—Confess.

MASINISSA.

What said my friend
Of poison?—love?—of loving Sophonisba?—
Yes, I admire her, wonder at her beauty,
And he who does not is as dull as earth,
The cold unanimated form of man,
Ere lighted up with the celestial fire.
Where'er she goes, still admiration gazes,
And listens while she talks. Even thou thyself,
Who saw'st her with the malice of a friend,
Ev'n thou thyself admir'st her.—Dost thou not?—
Say, speak sincerely.

NARVA.

She has charms indeed;
But has she charms like virtue?—Tho' majestic,
Does she command us with a force like glory?

MASINISSA.

All glory's in her eye! Perfection thence
Looks from its throne; and on her ample brow
Sits majesty. Her features glow with life,
Warm with heroic soul. Her mien! she walks
As when a towering goddess treads this earth.
But when her language flows; when such a mind
Descends to sooth, to sigh, to weep, to grasp
The tottering knee; oh! Narva, Narva, oh!
Expression here is dumb.

NARVA.

Alas! my Lord,
Is this the talk of sober admiration?
Are these the sallies of a heart at ease?
Of Scipio's friend? Is this thy steady virtue?

MASINISSA.

I tell thee once again, too cautious man,
That when a woman begs, a matchless woman,
A woman once belov'd, a fallen queen,
A Sophonisba! when she twines her charms
Around our soul, and all her power of looks,
Of tears, of sighs, of softness, plays upon us;
He's more or less than man who can resist her.
For me, my stedfast soul approves, nay more,
Exults in the protection it has promis'd:
And nought, tho' plighted honour did not bind me,
Should shake the virtuous purpose of my heart;
Nought, by th' avenging gods! who heard my vow,
And hear me now again.

NARVA.

And was it then
For this you conquer'd?

MASINISSA.

Yes, and triumph in it.
This was my fondest wish; the very point,
The plume of glory, the delicious prize
Of bleeding years. I must have been a brute,
A greater monster than Numidia breeds,
A horror to myself; if, on the ground,
Cast vilely from me, I th' illustrious fair
Had left to bondage, bitterness, and death.
Nor is there ought in war worth what I feel;
In pomp and hollow state, like the sweet sense
Of infelt bliss, which the reflection gives me,
Of saving thus such excellence and beauty
From what her generous soul abhors the most.

NARVA.

My friend! my royal lord! alas! you slide,
You sink from virtue.—On the giddy brink
Of fate you stand.—One step, and all is lost!

MASINISSA.

No more, no more! if this is being lost,
And rushing down the precipice of fate,
Then down I go, far far beyond the reach
Of scrupulous dull precaution.—Leave me, Narva,
I want to be alone, to find some shade,
Some solitary gloom; there to shake off
These harsh tumultuous cares that vex my life,
This sick ambition on itself recoiling;
And there to listen to the gentle voice,
The sigh of peace, something, I know not what,
That whispers transport to my heart.—Farewel.

SCENE IV.

NARVA, *alone.*

Struck, and he knows it not.—So when the field,
Elate in heart, the warrior scorns to yield;
The streaming blood can scarce convince his eyes,
Nor will he feel the wound by which he dies.

ACT III. SCENE I.

MASINISSA, *alone.*

IN vain I wander thro' the shade for peace;
'Tis with the calm alone, the pure of heart,
That there the goddess talks:—But in my breast,
Some busy thought, some secret eating pang,
Still restless throbs; on Sophonisba still
Earnest, intent, devoted all to her.—
What mean this mean?—'Tis Love, almighty Love!
Returning on me with a stronger tide.
Come to my breast, thou rosy, smiling god!
Come unconfin'd! bring all thy joys along,
All thy soft cares, and mix them copious here.—
Quick, let me fly to her; and there forget
This tedious absence, war, ambition, noise,
Friendship itself, the vanity of fame,
And all but love—for love is more than all.

SCENE II.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

Welcome again, my friend.—Come nearer, Narva;
Lend me thine arm, and I will tell thee all;
Unfold my secret heart, whose every pulse
With Sophonisba beats—Nay, hear me out.—

Swift, as I mus'd, the conflagration spread;
At once too strong, too general, to be quench'd.
I love, and I approve it; doat upon her;
Even think these minutes lost I talk with thee.
Heavens! what emotions have possess'd my soul!
Snatch'd by a moment into years of passion.

NARVA.

Ah, Masinissa!——

MASINISSA.

Argue not against me.
Talk down the circling winds that lift the desert;
And when, by lightning fir'd, the forests blaze,
Talk down the flame, but not my stronger love.
I have for love a thousand thousand reasons,
Dear to the heart, and potent o'er the soul.
My every thought, reflection, mem'ry, all
Are a perpetual spring of tenderness;
Oh, Sophonisba! I am wholly thine.

NARVA.

Is this deceitful day then come to nought,
This day that set thee on a double throne?
That gave thee Syphax chain'd, thy deadly foe?
With perfect conquest crown'd thee, perfect glory?
Is it so soon eclips'd? And does yon sun,
Yon setting sun, who this fair morning saw thee
Ride through the ranks of long-extended war,
As radiant as himself; and when the storm
Began, beheld thee tread the rising surge
Of battle high, and drive it on the foe;
Does he now, blushing, see thee sunk so weak?
Caught in a smile? the captive of a look?—
I cannot name it without tears

MASINISSA.

Away!
I'm sick of war, of the destroying trade,
Smooth'd o'er and gilded with the name of glory.
In vain you spread the martial field to me,
My happier eyes are turn'd another way,
Behold it not; or, if they do, behold it
Shrunk up, far off, a visionary scene;
As to the waking man appears the dream.

NARVA.

Or rather as realities appear,
The virtue, pomp, and dignities of life,
In sick disorder'd dreams.

MASINISSA.

Think not I scorn
The task of heroes, when oppression rages,
And lawless violence confounds the world.
Who would not bleed with transport for his country,
Tear every tender passion from his heart,
And greatly die to make a people happy,
Ought not to taste of happiness himself,
And is low-soul'd indeed.—But sure, my friend,
There is a time for love; or life were vile,
A tedious circle of unjoyous days,
With senseless hurry fill'd, distasteful, wretched;
Till love comes smiling in, and brings his sweets,
His healing sweets, soft cares, transporting joys,
That make the poor account of life complete,
And justify the gods.

NARVA.

Mistaken prince,
I blame not love. But——

MASINISSA.

Slander not my passion.
I've suffer'd thee too far.—Take heed, old man;—
Love will not bear an accusation, Narva.

NARVA.

I'll speak the truth, when truth and friendship call,
Nor fear thy frown unkind. Thou hast no right
To Sophonisba; she belongs to Rome.

MASINISSA.

Ha! she belongs to Rome.—'Tis true.—My thoughts,
Where have you wander'd, not to think of this?
Think ere I promis'd? ere I lov'd?—Confusion!
I know not what to say.—I should have lov'd,
Tho' Jove in muttering thunder had forbid it.
But Rome will not refuse so small a boon,
Whose gifts are kingdoms: Rome must grant it sure,
One captive to my wish, one poor request;
So small to them, but oh! so dear to me.
In this my heart confides.

NARVA.

Delusive love!
Thro' what wild projects is the frantic mind
Beguil'd by thee.—And think'st thou that the Romans,
The senators of Rome, these gods on earth,
Wise, steady to the right, severely just,
All uncorrupt, and, like eternal Fate,
Not to be mov'd, will listen to the sigh
Of idle love? They who, when Virtue calls,
Will not the voice itself of Nature hear,
But bid their children bleed before their eyes;
Will they regard the light fantastic pangs
Of a fond heart; and with thy kingdom, give thee

Their most inveterate foe, from their firm side,
Like Syphax, to delude thee, and the point
Of their own bounty on themselves to turn?—
Thou canst not hope it sure.—Impossible!

MASINISSA.

What shall I do?—Be now the friend exerted.
For love and honour press me; love and honour,
All that is dear and excellent in life,
All that or soothes the man or lifts the hero,
Engage my soul.

NARVA.

Rash was your vow, my lord.
I know not what to counsel. When you vow'd,
You vow'd what was not in your power to grant;
And therefore 'tis not binding.

MASINISSA.

Never! never!
Oh never will I falsify that vow!
Ere then destruction seize me!—Yes, ye Romans,
If it be so, there, take your kingdoms back,
Your friendship, your esteem, all, all but her.——
Hold—Let me think a while—It shall be so!
By all th' inspiring gods that prompt my thought,
This very night shall solemnize our vows;
And the next joyous sun that visits Afric,
See Sophonisba seated on my throne.——
Then must they spare my queen.—They will not, surely,
They will not dare to force my consort from me.

NARVA.

And is it possible?—Ye gods that rule us!
Can Masinissa, in his pride of youth,
In his meridian glory shining wide,

The light of Afric, can the friend of Scipio
Take a false woman to his nuptial bed,
Who scorn'd him for a tyrant old and cruel,
His rancorous foe, and gave her untouch'd bloom,
Her spring of charms, to Syphax?

MASINISSA.

Curs'd remembrance!
This, this, has thrown a serpent to my heart,
While it o'erflow'd with tenderness, with joy,
With all the sweetness of exulting love:
Now nought but gall is there, and burning poison.—
Yes, it was so.—Curse on her vain ambition!
What had her meddling sex to do with states?
Forsook for him, just gods! for hateful Syphax,
My tender faithful love for his gross passion!
The thought is hell!—Oh I had treasur'd up
A world of indignation, years of scorn;
But her sad suppliant witchcraft sooth'd it down.—
Where is she now, that it may burst upon her?
Haste, bring her to me; tho' my plighted faith
Shall save her from the Romans, yet I'll tell her,
That I will never, never see her more!—
Ha! there she comes.—Pernicious fair one!—Leave me.

SCENE III.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

Forgive this quick return.—The rage, confusion,
And mingled passions of this luckless day,
Made me forget another warm request

I had to beg of generous Masinissa:
For oh! to whom, save to the generous, can
The miserable fly?—But much disturb'd
You look, and scowl upon me a denial.
Repentance frowns on your contracted brow;
Already, weary of my sinking fate,
You seem to droop; and for unhappy Syphax
I shall implore in vain.

MASINISSA.

For Syphax? vengeance!
And canst thou mention him? Oh! grant me breath.

SOPHONISBA.

I know, young prince, how deep he has provok'd thee;
How keen he sought thy youth; thro' what a fire
Of great distress, from which you come the brighter.
On mere indifferent objects, common bounty
Will shower relief; but when our bitterest foe
Lies sunk, disarm'd, and desolate, then! then!
To feel the mercies of a pitying god,
To raise him from the dust, and that best way
To triumph o'er him, is heroic goodness.
Oh let unhappy Syphax touch thy heart,
Victorious Masinissa!

MASINISSA.

Monstrous this!
Still dost thou blast me with that cursed name!
The very name thy conscious guilt should shun.
Had he but driven me from my native throne,
From regal pomp and luxury, to dwell
Among the forest beasts; to bear the beam
Of red Numidian suns, and the dank dew
Of cold unshelter'd nights; to mix with wolves,

To hunt with hungry tigers for my prey,
And thirst with dipsads on the burning sand;
I could have thank'd him for his angry lesson;
The fair occasion that his rage afforded
Of learning patience, fortitude, and hope,
Still rising stronger on incumbent fate.
But there is one unpardonable outrage,
That scorches up the tear in Pity's eye,
And even sweet Mercy's self converts to gall.
I cannot—will not name it.—Down my heart,
My swelling heart!

SOPHONISBA.

Ah! whence this sudden storm,
That hurries all thy soul?

MASINISSA.

And dost thou ask?
Ask thy own faithless heart; snatch'd from my vows,
From the warm wishes of my springing youth,
And given to that old hated monster Syphax.—
Perfidious Sophonisba!

SOPHONISBA.

Nay, no more;
With too much truth I can return thy charge.
Why didst thou drive me to that cruel choice?
Why leave me, with my country, to destruction?
Why break thy love, thy faith, and join the Romans?

MASINISSA.

By Heavens! the Romans were my better genius,
Sav'd me from shame, and form'd my youth to glory.
But for the Romans, I had been a savage,
A wretch like Syphax, a forgotten thing,
The tool of Carthage.

SOPHONISBA.

Meddle not with Carthage,
Impatient youth; for that I will not bear;
Tho' I am here thy slave, I will not bear it.
Not one base word of Carthage—on thy soul!

MASINISSA.

How vain thy phrenzy!—Go, command thy slaves,
Thy fools, thy Syphaxes: but I will speak,
Speak loud of Carthage, call it false, ungenerous.
The Romans are the light, the glory——

SOPHONISBA.

Romans!
Perdition on the Romans!—on their friends!
On all—but thee. The Romans are the scourge
Of the vext world, destroyers of mankind,
And all beneath the smooth dissembling mask
Of justice and compassion; as if slave
Was but another name for civiliz'd.
Against her tyrant power, each generous sword
Of every nation should be drawn.—While Carthage
Unblemish'd rises on the base of commerce,
Founds her fair empire on that common good,
And asks of Heaven nought but the winds and tides
To carry plenty, letters, science, wealth,
Civility, and grandeur, round the world.

MASINISSA.

No more compare them; for the gods themselves
Declare for Rome.

SOPHONISBA.

It was not always so.
The gods declar'd for Hannibal when Italy
Blaz'd all around him, all her streams ran blood;

And when at Trebia, Thrasymene, and Cannæ,
The Carthaginian sword with Roman blood
Was drunk.—Oh! that he then, on that dread day,
While lifeless consternation blacken'd Rome,
Had raz'd th' accursed city to the ground,
And sav'd the world!—When will it come again,
A day so glorious, and so big with vengeance
On those my soul abhors?

MASINISSA.

Avert it, Heaven!
The Romans not enslave, but save the world
From Carthaginian rage——

SOPHONISBA.

I'll bear no more!
Nor tenderness, nor life, nor liberty,
Nothing shall make me bear it.—Rather, rather,
Detested as ye are, ye Romans, take me;
Oh! pitying take me to your nobler chains,
And save me from this abject youth, your slave!—
How canst thou kill me thus?——

MASINISSA.

I meant it not.
I only meant to tell thee, haughty fair one!
How this alone might bind me to the Romans;
That, in a frail and sliding hour, they snatch'd me
From the perdition of thy love, which fell,
Like baleful lightning, where I most could wish,
And prov'd destruction to my mortal foe.—
Oh, pleasing! fortunate!

SOPHONISBA.

I thank them too.
By Heavens! for once, I love them; since they turn'd

My better thoughts from thee; thou—but I will not
Give thee the name thy mean servility
From my just scorn deserves

MASINISSA.

Oh! freely call me
By every name thy fury can inspire;
Delight me with thy hate.—I love no more—
It will not hurt me, Sophonisba.——Love!
Long since I gave it to the passing winds,
And would not be a lover for the world.
A lover is the very fool of Nature,
Made sick by his own wantonness of thought,
His fever'd fancy: while, to your own charms
Imputing all, you swell with boundless pride.
Shame on the wretch! he should be driven from men,
To live with Asian slaves, in one soft herd;
All worthless, all ridiculous together.
For me, this moment here I mean to bid
Farewell, a glad farewell, to love and thee.

SOPHONISBA.

With all my soul, farewell!—Yet ere you go,
Know that my spirit burns as high as thine,
As high to glory, and as low to love.
Thy promises are void; and I absolve thee,
Here in the presence of the list'ning gods.—
Take thy repented vows.—To proud Cornelia
I'd rather be a slave, to Scipio's mother,
Than queen of all Numidia, by the favour
Of him who dares insult the helpless thus.

[*Pausing.*

Still dost thou stay? behold me then again,
Hopeless and wild, a lost abandon'd slave.

And now thy brutal purpose must be gain'd,
Away, thou cruel and ungenerous, go!

MASINISSA.

No, not for worlds would I resume my vow!
Dishonour blast me then! all kind of ills
Fill up my cup of bitterness and shame!
When I resign thee to triumphant Rome.
Oh lean not thus dejected to the ground!
The sight is misery.—What roots me here?
[*Aside.*
Alas! I have urg'd my foolish heart too far;
And love depress'd, recoils with greater force.—
Oh, Sophonisba!

SOPHONISBA.

By thy pride she dies;
Inhuman prince!

MASINISSA.

Thine is the triumph, Love!
By heaven and earth! I cannot hold it more.
Wretch that I was, to crush th' unhappy thus;
The fairest too, the dearest of her sex;
For whom my soul could die.—Turn, quickly turn,
O Sophonisba! my belov'd! my glory!
Turn and forgive the violence of love,
Of love that knows no bounds!

SOPHONISBA.

And can it be?
Can that soft passion prove so fierce of heart,
As on the tears of misery, the sighs
Of death, to feast; to torture what it loves?

MASINISSA.

Yes, it can be, thou goddess of my soul,
Whoſe each emotion is but varied love;
All over love, its powers, its passions, all;
Its anger, indignation, fury, love;
Its pride, disdain, even detestation, love:
And when it, wild, resolves to love no more,
Then is the triumph of excessive love.
Didst thou not mark me, mark the dubious rage
That tore my heart with anguish while I talk'd?
Thou didst; and must forgive so kind a fault.—
What would thy trembling lips?

SOPHONISBA.

Oh! let me die.—
For such another storm, so much contempt
Thrown out on Carthage, so much praise on Rome,
Were worse than death. Why should I longer tire
My weary fate? The most relentless Roman
What could he more?

MASINISSA.

Oh Sophonisba, hear!
See me thy suppliant now. Talk not of death,
I have no life but thee.—Alas! alas!
Hadst thou a little tenderness for me,
The smallest part of what I feel, thou would'st—
(What would'st thou not) forgive? But how indeed,
How can I hope it? Yet I from this moment
Will so devote my being to thy pleasure,
So live alone to gain thee, that thou must,
If there is human nature in thy breast,
Feel some relenting warmth.

SOPHONISBA.

Well, well, 'tis past:
To be inexorable suits not slaves.

MASINISSA.

Spare, spare that word; it stabs me to the soul;
My crown, my life, and liberty are thine.
Oh! give my passion way: My heart is full,
Oppres'd by love; and I could number tears,
With all the dews that sprinkle o'er the morn.
Oh! thou hast melted down my stubborn soul
To female tenderness.—Enough, enough,
Have we been cheated by the trick of state,
For Rome and Carthage suffer'd much too long;
And, led by gaudy fantoms, wander'd far,
Far from our bliss. But now since met again,
Since here I hold thee, circle all perfection
In these bless'd arms; since Fate too presses hard,
Since Rome and slavery drive thee to the brink,
Let this immediate night exchange our vows,
Secure my bliss, our future fortunes blend;
Set thee, the queen of beauty, on my throne,
And on these lovely brows, for empire form'd,
Place Afric's noblest crown.—A wretched gift,
To what my love would give.

SOPHONISBA.

What? marry thee?
This night?

MASINISSA.

Thou dear one! yes, this very night
Let injur'd Hymen have his rights restor'd,
And bind our broken vows.—Think, serious think

On what I plead.—A thousand reasons urge.—
Captivity dissolves thy former marriage;
And if the meanest vulgar thus are freed,
Can Sophonisba, to a slave, to Syphax!
The most exalted of her sex, be bound?
Besides it is the best, perhaps sole way,
To save thee from the Romans; and must sure
Bar their pretensions: or if ruin comes,
To perish with thee is to perish happy.

SOPHONISBA.

Yet must I still insist——

MASINISSA.

It shall be so.
I know thy purpose; it would plead for Syphax.
He shall have all, thou dearest! shall have all,
Crowns, trifles, kingdoms, all again, but thee,
But thee, thou more than all!

SOPHONISBA. [*Aside.*

Bear witness, Heaven!
This is alone for Carthage.

[*To him.*

Gain'd by goodness,
I may be thine. Expect no love, no sighing.
Perhaps, hereafter, I may learn again
To hold thee dear. If on these terms thou canst,
Here take me, take me to thy wishes.

MASINISSA.

Yes,
Yes, Sophonisba! as a wretch takes life
From off the rack.—All wild with frantic joy,
Thus hold thee, press thee to my bounding heart;
And bless the bounteous gods.—Can Heaven give more?

Oh happy! happy! happy!—Come, my fair,
This ready minute sees thy will perform'd;
From Syphax knocks his chains; and I myself,
Even in his favour, will request the Romans.
Oh, thou hast smil'd my passions into peace!—
So, while conflicting winds embroil'd the seas,
In perfect bloom, warm with immortal blood,
Young Venus rear'd her o'er the raging flood:
She smil'd around, like thine her beauties glow'd;
When smooth, in gentle swells, the surges flow'd;
Sunk, by degrees, into a liquid plain,
And one bright calm sat trembling on the main.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

PHOENISSA.

HAIL! queen of Masæsylia once again,
And fair Massylia join'd. This rising day
Saw Sophonisba, from the height of life,
Thrown to the very brink of slavery;
State, honours, armies vanish'd, nothing left
But her own great unconquerable mind.
And yet, ere evening comes, to larger power
Restor'd, I see my royal friend, and kneel
In grateful homage to the gods, and her.
Ye powers, what awful changes often mark
The fortunes of the great!

SOPHONISBA.

Phœnissa, true;
'Tis awful all, the wonderous work of Fate.
But, ah! this sudden marriage damps my soul:
I like it not, that wild precipitance
Of youth, that ardor, that impetuous stream
In which his love return'd. At first, my friend,
He vainly rag'd with disappointed love;
And, as the hasty storm subsided, then
To softness varied, to returning fondness,
To sighs, to tears, to supplicating vows.
But all his vows were idle, till at last
He shook my heart by Rome.—To be his queen
Could only save me from their horrid power.
And there is madness in that thought, enough

In that strong thought alone to make me run
From nature.

PHŒNISSA.

Was it not auspicious, Madam;
Just as we hop'd, just as our wishes plann'd?—
Nor let your spirits sink: your serious hours,
When you behold the Roman ravage check'd,
From their enchantment Masinissa freed,
And Carthage mistress of the world again,
This marriage will approve: then will it rise
In all its glory, virtuous, wise, and great,
While happy nations, then delivered, join
Their loud acclaim. And, had the bless'd occasion
Neglected flown, where now had been your hopes,
Your liberty, your country, where your all?
Think well of this; you cannot but exult
In what is done.

SOPHONISBA.

So may my hopes succeed,
As love alone to Carthage, to the public,
Led me a marriage-victim to the temple,
And jusifies my vows!—Ha! Syphax here!—
What would his rage with me?—Phœnissa, stay.—
But this one trial more.—Heroic truth,
Support me now!

SCENE II.

SYPHAX, SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

SYPHAX.

You seem to fly me, Madam,
To shun my gratulations.—Here I come,

To join the general joy; and I, sure I,
Who have to dotage, have to ruin lov'd you,
Must take a tender part in your success,
In your recover'd state.

SOPHONISBA.

'Tis very well;
I thank you, Sir.

SYPHAX.

And gentle Masinissa,
Say, will he prove a very coming fool;
All pliant, all devoted to your will;
A duteous wretch like Syphax?—Ha! not mov'd!
Speak, thou perfidious! canst thou bear it thus,
With such a steady countenance? canst thou
Here see the man thou hast so grossly wrong'd,
And yet not sink in shame? and yet not shake
In every guilty nerve?

SOPHONISBA.

What have I done,
That I should tremble? that I should not dare
To bear thy presence?—Was my heart to blame,
I'd tremble at myself, and not at thee,
Proud man.—Nor would I live to be asham'd;
For of all evils, to the generous, shame
Is the most deadly pang.—But you behold
My late engagement with a jealous, false,
And selfish eye.

SYPHAX.

Avenging Juno, hear!
And canst thou think to jusify thyself?—
I blush to hear thee, traitress!

SOPHONISBA.

O my soul!
Canst thou hear this, this base opprobrious language,
And yet be tamely calm?—Well, for this once
It shall be so, in pity to thy madness.—
Impatient spirit, down!—Yes, Syphax, yes,
Yes, I will greatly justify myself:
Even by the consort of the thundering Jove,
Who binds the holy marriage-vow, be judg'd:
And every generous heart, not meanly lost
In little low pursuits, will sure absolve me.
But in the tempest of the soul, when rage,
Loud indignation, unattentive pride,
And jealousy confound it, how can then
The nobler *public* sentiments be heard?—
Yet let me tell thee——

SYPHAX.

Thou canst tell me nought.
Away! away! nought but illusion, falsehood——

SOPHONISBA.

My heart will burst, in justice to myself,
If here I speak not: tho' thy rage, I know,
Can never be convinc'd, yet shall it be
Confounded.—What! must I renounce my freedom?
Forego the power of doing general good?
Yield myself up the slave, the barbarous triumph
Of insolent, enrag'd, inveterate Rome?
And all for nothing but to grace thy fall?
Nay, singly perish, to retain the name,
The empty title of a captive's wife?—
For thee, the Romans may be mild to thee;
But I, a Carthaginian, I, whose blood

Holds unrelenting enmity to theirs;
Who have myself much hurt them, and who live
Only to work them woe; what, what can I
Hope from their vengeance, but the very dregs
Of the worst fate, the bitterness of bondage?
Yet thou, kind man, thou in thy generous love,
Wouldst have me suffer that; be bound to thee,
For that dire end alone, beyond the stretch
Of nature and of law.

SYPHAX.

Confusion! law!—
I know the laws permit thee; the gross laws
That rule the vulgar.—I'm a captive; true;
And therefore may'st thou plead a shameful right
To leave me to my chains.—But say, thou base one!
Ungrateful, say, for whom am I a captive?
For whom has battle after battle bled?
For whom my crown, my kingdom, and my all,
Been vilely cast away?—For one, ye gods!
Who leaves me for the victor, for the foe
I hold in utter endless detestation.
Fire! fury! hell!—Oh I am richly paid!
But this it is to love a Woman—Woman!
The source of all disaster, all perdition!—
Man in himself is social, would be happy,
Too happy, but the gods, to keep him wretched,
Curs'd him with woman! fond, enchanting, smooth,
And harmless-seeming woman; but at heart
All poison, serpents, tygers, furies, all
That is destructive, in one breast combin'd,
And gilded o'er with beauty!

SOPHONISBA.

Hapless man!
I pity thee: this madness only stirs

My bosom to compassion, not to rage.—
Think as you list of our unhappy sex,
To much subjected to your tyrant force:
Yet know that all, we were not all at least
Form'd for your trifles, for your wanton hours;
Our passions too can sometimes soar above
The household task assign'd us, can extend
Beyond the narrow sphere of families,
And take great states into th' expanded heart,
As well as yours, ye partial to yourselves!
And this is my support, my joy, my glory;
On these great principles, and these alone,
I still direct my conduct.

SYPHAX.

False as hell!
I loath your sex when it pretends to virtue.
You talk of honour, conscience, patriotism!
A female patriot!—Vanity!—absurd!—
Even doating dull credulity would laugh
To hear you prate. Did ever woman yet
Form any better purpose in her thought,
Than how to please her pride or wanton will?
Those are the principles on which you act;
Yes, those alone.

SOPHONISBA.

Must I then, must I, Syphax,
Give thee a bitter proof of what I say?
I would not seem to heighten thy distress,
Not in the least insult thee. Thou art fallen,
So fate severe has will'd it, fallen by me;
I therefore have been patient: from another,
Such language, such indignity, had fir'd
My soul to madness. But since driven so far,

I must remind thy blind, injurious rage,
Of our unhappy marriage——

SYPHAX.

Dar'st thou name it,
After such perfidy?

SOPHONISBA.

Allow me, Syphax—
Hear me but once! If what I here declare
Shines not with reason, and the clearest truth,
May I be base, despis'd, and dumb for ever!
I pray thee think, when unpropitious Hymen
Our hands united, how I stood engag'd.—
Was I not blooming in the pride of youth,
And youthful hopes? sunk in a passion too
Which few resign?—Yet then I married thee,
Because to Carthage deem'd a stronger friend:—
For that alone. On these conditions, say,
Didst thou not take me, court me to thy throne?
Have I deceiv'd thee since? Have I dissembled?
To gain one purpose, e'er pretended what
I never felt?—Thou canst not say I have.
And if that principle, which then inspir'd
My marrying thee, was right, it cannot now
Be wrong: nay, since my native city wants
Assistance more, and sinking calls for aid,
'Tis still more right.

SYPHAX.

This reasoning is insult!

SOPHONISBA.

I'm sorry that thou dost oblige me to it:
Then, in a word, take my full-open'd soul:—

All love, but that of Carthage, I despise.
I formerly to Masinissa thee
Preferr'd not, nor to thee now Masinissa;
But Carthage to you both. And if preferring
Thousands to one, a whole collected people,
All Nature's tenderness, whate'er is sacred,
The liberty, the welfare of a state,
To one man's frantic happiness, be shame;
Here, Syphax, I invoke it on my head!
This set aside; I, careless of myself,
And scorning prosperous state, had still been thine;
In all the depth of misery, proudly thine.
But since the public good, the law supreme,
Forbids it; I will leave thee with a kingdom,
The same I found thee, or not reign myself.
Alas! I see thee hurt.—Why cams't thou here,
Thus to enflame thee more?

SYPHAX.

Why, sorceress? why?—
Thou complication of all deadly mischief!
Thou lying, soothing, specious, charming fury!
I'll tell thee why:—To breathe my great revenge,
To throw this load of burning madness from me—
To stab thee!——

SOPHONISBA.

Ha!—

SYPHAX.

—And, springing from thy heart,
To quench me with thy blood.

[*Phœnissa interposes.*

SOPHONISBA.

Off, give me way,
Phœnissa; tempt not thou his brutal rage.

Me, me, he dares not murder: if he dares,
Here let his fury strike; for I dare die.—
What holds thy trembling hand?

PHOENISSA.

Guards!

SOPHONISBA.

Seize the king.
But look you treat him well, with all the state
His dignity demands.

SYPHAX.

That care from thee
Is worse than death.—The Roman trumpets!—Ha!
Now I bethink me, Rome will do me justice.
Yes, I shall see thee walk the slave of Rome,
Forget my wrongs, and glut me with the sight.
Be that my best revenge.

SOPHONISBA.

Inhuman!—that,
If there is death in Afric, shall not be.

SCENE III.

LÆLIUS, SYPHAX.

LÆLIUS.

Syphax!—alas! how fallen! how chang'd! from what
I here beheld thee onee in pomp and splendor,
At that illustrious interview, when Rome
And Carthage met beneath this very roof;
Their two great generals, Asdrubal and Scipio,

To court thy friendship. Of the same repast
Both gracefully partook, and both reclin'd
On the same couch: for personal distaste
And hatred seldom burn between the brave.
Then the superior virtues of the Roman
Gain'd all thy heart. Even Asdrubal himself,
With admiration struck and just despair,
Own'd him as powerful at the social feast
As in the battle. This thou may'st remember;
And how thy faith was given before the gods,
And sworn and seal'd to Scipio: yet how false
Thou since hast prov'd, I need not now recount:
But let thy sufferings for thy guilt atone,
The captive for the king. A Roman tongue
Scorns to pursue the triumph of the sword
With mean upbraidings.

SYPHAX.

Lælius, 'tis too true.
Curse on the cause!

LÆLIUS.

But where is Masinissa?
The brave young victor, the Numidian Roman,
Where is he? that my joy, my glad applause,
From envy pure, may hail his happy state.—
Why that contemptuous smile?

SYPHAX.

Too credulous Roman,
I smile too think how this brave Masinissa,
This Rome-devoted hero, must still more
Attract thy praises, by a late exploit;
In every thing successful.

LÆLIUS.

What is this—
These public shouts? A strange unusual joy
O'er all the captive city blazes wide.
What wanton riot reigns to-night in Cirtha,
Within these conquer'd walls?

SYPHAX.

This, Lælius, is
A night of triumph o'er my conqueror,
O'er Masinissa.

LÆLIUS.

Masinissa!—How?

SYPHAX.

Why, he to-night is married to my queen.

LÆLIUS.

Impossible!——

SYPHAX.

Yes, she, the fury! she,
Who put the nuptial torch into my hand,
That set my throne, my palace, and my kingdom,
All in a blaze; she now has seiz'd on him;
Will turn him soon from Rome.—I know her power,
Her lips distil unconquerable poison.—
O glorious thought! her arts, her fatal love
Will crush him deep, beneath the mighty ruins
Of falling Carthage.

LÆLIUS.

Can it be?—Amazement!

SYPHAX.

Nay learn it from himself.—He comes.—Away,
Ye furies, snatch me from his sight!—For hell,

Its tortures all are gentle to the presence
Of a triumphant rival!

LÆLIUS.

What is man!

SCENE IV.

MASINISSA, LÆLIUS.

MASINISSA.

Thou more than partner of this glorious day,
Which has from Carthage torn her chief support,
And tottering left her, I rejoice to see thee.—
To Cirtha welcome, Lælius. Thy brave legions
Now taste the sweet repose by valour purchas'd:
This city pours refreshment on their toils.—
I order'd Narva—

LÆLIUS.

Thanks to Masinissa,
All that is well.—But I observ'd the king
More loosely guarded than befits the state
Of such a captive. True, indeed, from him
There is not much to fear. The dangerous spirit
Is his imperious queen, his Sophonisba:
The pride, the rage of Carthage, live in her.—
How? where is she?

MASINISSA.

She, Lælius!—in my care.
Think not of her. I'll answer for her conduct.

LÆLIUS.

Yes, if in chains. Till then, believe me, prince,
It were as safe to answer for the winds,

That their loos'd fury will not rouse the waves;
Or that the darted lightning will be harmless;
As promise peace from her.—But why so dark?—
You shift your place, your countenance grows warm:
It is not usual this in Masinissa.—
Pray, what offence can asking for the queen,
The Roman captive, give?

MASINISSA.

Lælius, no more.—
You know my marriage.—Syphax has been busy.—
It is unkind to dally with my passion.

LÆLIUS.

Ah, Masinissa! was it then for this,
Thy hurry hither from the recent battle?
Is the first instance of the Roman bounty
Thus, thus abus'd?—They give thee back thy kingdom;
And, in return, are of their captive robb'd;
Of all they valued—Sophonisba.—

MASINISSA.

Robb'd!—
How, Lælius, Robb'd!

LÆLIUS.

Yes, Masinissa, robb'd:
What is it else?—But I, this very night,
Will here assert the majesty of Rome,
And (mark me!) tear her from the nuptial bed.

MASINISSA.

Oh gods! oh patience!—As soon, fiery Roman,
As soon thy rage might from her azure sphere
Tear yonder moon.—The man who seizes her,
Shall set his foot first on my bleeding heart.—
Of that be sure.—And is it thus you treat

Your firm allies?—Thus, kings in friendship with you?
Of human passions strip them?—Slaves indeed!
If thus deny'd the common privilege
Of nature, what the weakest creatures claim—
A right to what they love.

LÆLIUS.

Out! out!—For shame!
This passion makes thee blind. Here is a war,
Which desolates the nations, has almost
Laid waste the world. How many widows, orphans,
And tender virgins weep its rage in Rome!
Even her great senate droops; her nobles fail.
Nature herself, by frequent prodigies,
Seems at this havock of her works to sicken:
And our Ausonian plains are now become
A horror to the sight: at each sad step,
Remembrance weeps.—Yet her, the greatest prize
It hitherto has yielded; her, whose charms
Are only turn'd to whet its cruel point;
Thou to thy wedded breast hast wildly taken,
Hast purchas'd thee her beauties by the blood
Of thy protecting friends; and on a throne
Set her, this day recover'd by their arms.—
Canst thou do this, and call thyself a king
Ally'd to Rome?—Rash youth, the Roman people,
To kings who dare offend them thus, vouchsafe not
The honour of their friendship.—Thou hast thrown
That glory from thee, and must now be taught
To dread their wrath.

MASINISSA.

Be not so haughty, Lælius.
It scarce becomes the gentle Scipio's friend;

Suits not thy character, the tender manners
I still have mark'd in thee. I honour Rome:
But honour too myself, my vows, my queen:
Nor will, nor can I tamely hear thee threaten
To seize her like a slave.

LÆLIUS.

I will be calm.
This thy rash deed, this unexpected shock,
Such a peculiar injury to me,
Thy friend and fellow-soldier, has perhaps
Snatch'd me too far. For hast thou not dishonour'd,
By this last action, a successful war,
Our common charge, trusted to us by Scipio?

MASINISSA.

Our charge from Scipio was to conquer Syphax;
Not by a barbarous triumph to insult
His beauteous queen. Was Sophonisba made
To follow weeping a proud victor's chariot?
She, the first mistress of my heart, who still
Reigns in my soul, and there will reign for ever.
At such a sight, the warrior's eye might wet
His burning cheek; and all the Roman matrons,
Who lin'd the laurel'd way, asham'd and sad,
Turn from a captive brighter than themselves.—
But Scipio will be milder.

LÆLIUS.

I disdain
This thy surmise, and give it up to Scipio.—
These passions are not comely.—Here to-morrow
Comes the proconsul. Mean-time, Masinissa,
Ah! harden not thyself in flattering hope.
Scipio is mild, but steady.—Ha! the queen.—
I think she hates a Roman—and will leave thee.

SCENE V.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

SOPHONISBA

Was not that Roman Lælius, as I enter'd,
Who parted gloomy hence?

MASINISSA.

Madam, the same.

SOPHONISBA.

Unhappy Afric! since these haughty Romans
Have in this lordly manner trod thy courts.
I read his fresh reproaches in thy face;
The lesson'd pupil in thy fallen look,
In that forc'd smile which sickens on thy cheek.

MASINISSA.

Oh say not so, thou rapture of my soul!
For while I fondly gaze upon thy charms,
I smile as joyous as the sun in May;
Nor can my heart, by thee possess'd, retain
One painful thought.

SOPHONISBA.

Nay, tell me, Masinissa,
How feels their tyranny when 'tis brought home;
When, lawless grown, it touches what is dear?—
Pomp for a while may dazzle thoughtless man,
False glory blind him; but there is a time,
When even the slave in heart will spurn his chains,
Nor know submission more.—What said thy tyrant?

MASINISSA.

His disappointment for a moment only
Burst in vain passion, and——

SOPHONISBA.

You stood abash'd;
You bore his threats, and, tamely silent, heard him,
Heard the fierce Roman mark me for his triumph.
Oh! meanness!

MASINISSA.

Banish that unkind suspicion.
The thought inflam'd my soul. I vow'd my life,
My last Massylian to the sword, ere he
Should touch thy freedom with the least dishonour.
But that from Scipio—

SOPHONISBA.

Scipio!

MASINISSA.

That from him—

SOPHONISBA.

I tell thee, Masinissa, if from him
You gain my freedom, from myself conceal it.
I shall disdain such freedom.

MASINISSA.

Sophonisba,
Thou all my heart holds precious, doubt no more.
Nor Rome, nor Scipio, nor a world combin'd,
Shall tear thee from me; till outstretch'd I lie,
A nameless corpse.

SOPHONISBA.

If thy protection fails,
Of this at least be sure, be very sure,
To give me timely death.

MASINISSA.

Cease thus to talk,
Of death, of Romans, of unkind ambition:
My softer thoughts those rugged themes refuse,
And turn alone to love.—All, all, but thee,
All nature is a passing dream to me.
Fix'd in my view, thou dost for ever shine,
Thy form forth-beaming from the soul divine.
A spirit thine, which mortals might adore;
Despising love, and thence creating more.
Thou the high passions, I the tender prove,
Thy heart was form'd for glory, mine for love.

ACT V. SCENE I.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

HAIL to the joyous day! With purple clouds
The whole horizon glows. The breezy Spring
Stands loosely floating on the mountain top,
And deals her sweets around. The sun too seems,
As conscious of my joy, with brighter beams
To gild the happy world; and all things smile
Like Sophonisba. Love and friendship sure
Have mark'd this day with all their choicest blessing:
Oh! Sophonisba's mine! and Scipio comes!

NARVA.

My lord, the trumpets speak his near approach.

MASINISSA.

I want his secret audience.—Leave us, Narva.

SCENE II.

SCIPIO, MASINISSA.

MASINISSA.

Scipio! more welcome than my tongue can speak!
Oh greatly, dearly welcome!

SCIPIO.

Masinissa!
My heart beats back thy joy.—A happy friend,
Rais'd by his prudence, fortitude, and valour,

O'er all his foes; and on his native throne,
Amidst his rescu'd shouting subjects, set.
Say, can the gods in lavish bounty give
A sight more pleasing?

MASINISSA.

My great friend and patron!
It was thy timely, thy restoring aid,
That brought me from the fearful desert-life,
To live again in state and purple splendor.
Thy friendship arm'd me with the strength of Rome,
And now I wield the sceptre of my fathers.
See my dear people from the tyrant's scourge,
From Syphax freed; I hear their glad applauses:
And, to complete my happiness, have gain'd
A friend worth all. O gratitude, esteem,
And love like mine, with what divine delight
Ye fill the heart!

SCIPIO.

Heroic youth! thy virtue
Has earn'd whate'er thy fortune can bestow.
It was thy patience, Masinissa, patience,
A champion clad in steel, that in the waste
Attended still thy step, and sav'd my friend
For better days. What cannot patience do?—
A great design is seldom snatch'd at once;
'Tis patience heaves it on. From savage Nature,
'Tis patience that has built up human life,
The nurse of arts; and Rome exalts her head,
An everlasting monument of patience.

MASINISSA.

If I have that, or any virtue, Scipio,
'Tis copy'd all from thee.

SCIPIO.

No, Masinissa,
'Tis all unborrow'd, the spontaneous growth
Of Nature in thy breast.—Friendship for once
Must, though thou blushest, wear a liberal tongue;
Must tell thee, noble youth, that long experience
In councils, battles, many a hard event,
Has found thee still so constant, so sincere,
So wise, so brave, so generous, so humane,
So well attemper'd, and so fitly turn'd
For what is either great or good in life,
As casts distinguish'd honour on thy country,
And cannot but endear thee to the Romans.
For me, I think my labours all repaid,
My wars in Afric.—Masinissa's friendship
Rewards them all.—Be that my dearest triumph,
To have assisted thy forlorn estate,
And lent a happy hand in raising thee
To thy paternal throne, usurp'd by Syphax.
The greatest service could be done my country,
Distracted Afric, and mankind in general,
Was thus to aid thy worth. To put the power
Of sovereign rule into the good man's hand,
Is giving peace and happiness to millions.
But has my friend, since late we parted armies,
Since he with Lælius acted such a brave,
Auspicious part, against the common foe;
Has he been blameless quite? has he consider'd,
How pleasure often on the youthful heart,
Beneath the rosy soft disguise of love
(All sweetness, smiles, and seeming innocence),
Steals unperceiv'd, and lays the victor low?—
I would not, cannot put thee to the pain—
It pains me deeper—of the least reproach.—

Let thy too faithful memory supply
The rest. [*Pausing.*
Thy silence, that dejected look,
That honest colour flushing o'er thy cheek,
Impart thy better soul.

MASINISSA.

Oh, my good lord!
Oh, Scipio! Love has seiz'd me; tyrant Love
Inthralls my soul.—I am undone by love.

SCIPIO.

And art thou then to ruin reconcil'd?
Tam'd to destruction?—Wilt thou be undone?
Resign the towering thought? the vast design,
With future glories big? the warrior's wreath?
The praise of senates? an applauding world?
All for a sigh? all for a soft embrace?
For a gay transient fancy, Masinissa?—
For shame, my friend!—For honour's sake, for virtue's,
Sit not with folded arms, despairing, weak,
Like a sick virgin sighing to the gale,
Till sure destruction comes.—Alas! how chang'd
From him, the man I lov'd!

MASINISSA.

How chang'd indeed!—
The time has been, when, fir'd from Scipio's tongue,
My soul had mounted in a flame with his.—
Where is ambition flown?—Hopeless attempt!—
Can love like mine be quell'd? Can I forget
What still possesses, charms my thoughts for ever?
Throw scornful from me what I hold most dear?
Not feel the force of excellence? to joy
Be dead? and undelighted with delight?—

Hold, let me think a moment.—No! no! no!
I am unequal to thy virtue, Scipio.

SCIPIO.

Fie, Masinissa, fie!—By heavens! I blush
At thy dejection, this degenerate language.
What! perish for a woman! ruin all,
All the fair deeds which an admiring world
Hopes from thy riper years; only to soothe
A stubborn fancy, a luxurious will?
How must it, think you, sound in future story?—
Young Masinissa was a virtuous prince,
And Afric smil'd beneath his early ray;
But that a Carthaginian captive came,
By whom untimely in the common fate
Of love he fell.—The wise will scorn the page;
And all thy praise be some fond maid exclaiming,
Where are those lovers now?—O rather, rather
Had I ne'er seen the vital light of heaven,
Than like the vulgar live, and like them die!—
Ambition sickens at the very thought.——
To puff and bustle here from day to day,
Lost in the passions of inglorious life,
Joys which the careless brutes possess above us;
And when some years, each duller than another,
Are thus elaps'd, in nauseous pangs to die;
And pass away, like those forgotten things
That soon become as they had never been.

MASINISSA.

And am I dead to this!

SCIPIO.

The gods, my friend,
Who train up heroes in Misfortune's school,

Have shook thee with Adversity; with each
Illustrious evil that can raise, expand,
And fortify the mind. Thy rooted worth
Has stood these wintry blasts, grown stronger by them.
Shall then, in prosperous times, while all is mild,
All vernal fair, and glory blows around thee;
Shall then the *dead serene* of pleasure come,
And lay thy faded honours in the dust?

MASINISSA.

O, gentle Scipio! spare me, spare my weakness.

SCIPIO.

Remember Hannibal.—A signal proof,
A fresh example of destructive pleasure.
He was the dread of nations, once of Rome:
When from Bellona's bosom, nurs'd in camps,
And hard with toil, he down the rugged Alps
Rush'd like a torrent over Italy;
Unconquer'd, till the loose delights of Capua
Sunk his victorious arm, his genius broke,
Perfum'd, and made a lover of the hero.
Lo! now he droops in Bruttium, fear'd no more.—
Remember him; and yet resume thy spirit,
Ere it be quite dissolv'd.

MASINISSA.

Shall Scipio stoop
Thus to regard, to teach me wisdom thus,
And yet a stupid anguish at my heart
Repel whate'er he says?—But why, my friend,
Why should we kill the best of passions, love?
It aids the hero, bids ambition rise
To nobler heights, inspires immortal deeds,
Even softens brutes, and adds a grace to virtue.

SCIPIO.

There is a holy tenderness indeed,
A virtuous, social, sympathetic love,
That binds, supports, and sweetens human life.
But is thy passion such?—List, Masinissa,
While I the hardest office of a friend
Discharge; and, with a necessary hand,
A hand, tho' harsh at present, truly tender,
I paint this passion: and if then thou still
Art bent to soothe it, I must sighing leave thee,
To what the gods think fit.

MASINISSA.

O never, Scipio,
O never leave me to myself!—Speak on:
I dread, and yet desire thy friendly hand.

SCIPIO.

I hope that Masinissa needs not now
Be told, how much his happiness is mine;
With what a warm benevolence I'd spring
To raise, confirm it, to prevent his wishes
In every right pursuit.—But while he rages,
Burns in a fever, shall I let him quaff
Delicious poison for a cooling draught,
In foolish pity to his thirst? shall I
Let a swift flame consume him as he sleeps,
Because his dreams are gay? shall I indulge
A freenzy flash'd from an infectious eye,
A sudden impulse unapprov'd by reason?
Nay, by thy cool deliberate thought condemn'd,
Resolv'd against?—A passion for a woman,
Who has abus'd thee basely? left thy youth,
Thy love as sweet, as tender as the spring,

The blooming hero for the hoary tyrant?
And now, who makes thy sheltering arms alone
Her last retreat, to save her from the vengeance
Which even her very perfidy to thee
Has brought upon her head?—Nor is this all:—
A woman who will ply her deepest arts
(Ah! too prevailing, as appears already),
Will never rest till Syphax' fate is thine;
Till Friendship weeping flies, we join no more
In glorious deeds, and thou fall off from Rome?
I could add too, that there is something cruel,
Inhuman in thy passion. Does not Syphax,
While thou rejoicest, die? The generous heart
Should scorn a pleasure which gives others pain.——
If this, my friend, all this consider'd deep,
Alarm thee not, nor rouse thy resolution,
And call the hero from his wanton slumber,
Then Masinissa's lost.

MASINISSA.

Oh, I am pierc'd!
In every thought am pierc'd!—'Tis all too true.—
I would, but can't deny it.—Whither, whither,
Thro' what enchanted wilds have I been wandering?
They seem'd Elysium, the delightful plains,
The happy groves of heroes and of lovers;
But the divinity that breathes in thee
Has broke the charm, and I am in a desert,
Far from the land of peace. It was but lately
That a pure joyous calm o'erspread my soul,
And reason tun'd my passions into bliss;
When love came hurrying in, and with rash hand
Mix'd them delirious, till they now ferment
To misery.—There is no reasoning down

This deep, deep anguish! this continual pang!—
A thousand things, whene'er my raptur'd thought
Runs back a little—But I will not think.—
And yet I must.—Oh gods! that I could lose
What a few hours have on my memory grav'd
In adamant!

SCIPIO.

But one strong effort more,
And the fair field is thine—A conquest far
Excelling that o'er Syphax. What remains,
Since now thy madness to thyself appears,
But an immediate manly resolution,
To shake off this effeminate disease;
These soft ideas which seduce thy soul,
Make it all idle, weak, inglorious, wild,
A scene of dreams; to give them to the winds,
And be my former friend, thyself again?——
I joy to find thee touch'd by generous motives,
And that I need not bid thee recollect
Whose awful property thou hast usurp'd;
Need not assure thee, that the Roman people,
The senators of Rome, will never suffer
A dangerous woman, their devoted foe,
A woman, whose irrefragable spirit
Has in great part sustain'd this bloody war,
Whose charms corrupted Syphax from their side,
To ruin thee too, taint thy faithful breast,
And kindle future war. No, Fate itself
Is not more steady to the right than they.
And where the public good but seems concern'd,
No motive their impenetrable hearts,
Nor fear nor tenderness, can touch: such is
The spirit that has rais'd imperial Rome.

MASINISSA.

Ah, killing truth!—But I have promis'd, Scipio,
Have sworn to save her from the Roman power:
My plighted faith is pass'd, my hand is given;
And, by the conscious gods! who mark'd my vows,
The whole united world shall never have her.
For I will die a thousand thousand deaths,
With all Massylia in one field expire;
Ere to the lowest wretch, much less to her
I love, to Sophonisba, to my queen,
I violate my word.

SCIPIO.

My heart approves
Thy resolution, thy determin'd honour.
For ever sacred be thy word, and oath.
But, thus divided, how to keep thy faith
At once to Rome and Sophonisba; how
To save her from our chains, and yet thyself
From greater bondage; this thy secret thought
Can best inform thee.

MASINISSA.

Agony! distraction!—
These wilful tears!—O look not on me, Scipio,
For I'm a child again.

SCIPIO.

Thy tears are no reproach.
Tears oft look graceful on the manly cheek.
The cruel cannot weep. Lo! Friendship's eye
Gives thee the drop it would refuse itself.
I know 'tis hard, wounds every bleeding nerve
About thy heart, thus to tear off thy passion.
But for that very reason, Masinissa,
'Tis hop'd from thee. The harder, thence results

The greater glory.—Why should we pretend
To conquer nations, and to rule mankind,
Pre-eminent in glory, place, and power,
While slaves at heart? while by fantastic turns
Our frantic passions reign?—This very thought
Should turn our pomp to shame, disgrace our triumphs;
And, when the shouts of millions rend our ears,
Whisper reproach.—O ye celestial powers!
What is it, in a torrent of success,
To overflow the world; if by the stream
Our own enfeebled minds are borne away
From reason and from virtue? Real glory
Springs from the silent conquest of ourselves;
And without that the conqueror is nought
But the first slave.—Then rouse thee, Masinissa!
Nor in one weakness all thy virtues lose;
And, oh! beware of long, of vain repentance.

MASINISSA.

Well! well! no more.—It is but dying too.

SCENE III.

SCIPIO, *alone.*

I wish I have not urg'd the truth to rigour!
There is a time when virtue grows severe,
Too much for nature, and almost even cruel.

SCENE IV.

SCIPIO, LÆLIUS.

SCIPIO.

Poor Masinissa, Lælius, is undone;
Betwixt his passion and his reason tost
In miserable conflict.

LÆLIUS.

Entering, Scipio,
He shot athwart me, nor vouchsaf'd one look.
Hung on his clouded brow, I mark'd despair,
And his eye glaring with some dire resolve.
Fast o'er his cheek too ran the hasty tear.—
It were great pity that he should be lost.

SCIPIO.

By Heavens! to lose him were a shock, as if
I lost thee, Lælius, lost my dearest brother.
Bound up in friendship from our infant years,
A thousand lovely qualities endear him;
Only too warm of heart.

LÆLIUS.

What shall be done?

SCIPIO.

Here let it rest, till time abates his passion.
Nature is nature, Lælius, let the wise
Say what they please. But now perhaps he dies.—
Haste! haste! and give him hope—I have not time
To tell thee what.—Thy prudence will direct.—
Whatever is consistent with my honour,
My duty to the public, and my friendship
To him himself, say, promise shall be done,
I hope returning reason will prevent
Our farther care.

LÆLIUS.

I fly with joy.

SCIPIO.

His life
Not only save, but Sophonisba's too;
For both I fear are in this passion mixt.

LÆLIUS.

It shall be done.

SCENE V.

SCIPIO, *alone.*

If friendship suffers thus;
When Love pours in his added violence,
What are the pangs which Masinissa feels!

SCENE VI.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

Yes, Masinissa loves me—Heavens! how fond!
But yet I know not what hangs on my spirit,
A dismal boding: for this fatal Scipio,
I dread his virtues: this prevailing Roman
Even now perhaps deludes the generous king,
Fires his ambition with mistaken glory;
Demands me from him: for full well he knows,
That while I live I must intend their ruin.

PHOENISSA.

Madam, these fears——

SOPHONISBA.

And yet it cannot be.
Can Scipio, whom even hostile fame proclaims
Of perfect honour, and of polish'd manners,
Smooth, artful, winning, moderate, and wise,
Make such a wild demand?—Or, if he could,
Can Masinissa grant it? give his queen,
Whom love and honour bind him to protect,
Yield her a captive to triumphant Rome?—
'Tis baseness to suspect it; 'tis inhuman.—

What then remains?—Suppose they should resolve
By right of war to seize me for their prize——
Ay, there it kills!—What can his single arm
Against the Roman power? that very power
By which he stands restor'd?—Distracting thought!
Still o'er my head the rod of bondage hangs.
Shame on my weakness.—This poor catching hope,
This transient taste of joy, will only more
Imbitter death.

PHOENISSA.

A moment will decide.
Madam, till then——

SOPHONISBA.

Would I had dy'd before!—
And am I dreaming here? Here! from the Romans
Beseeching I may live to swell their triumph?
When my free spirit should ere now have join'd
That great assembly, those devoted shades,
Who scorn'd to live till liberty was lost,
But, ere their country fell, abhorr'd the light.—
Whence this pale slave?—he trembles with his message.

SCENE VII.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA; *and to them a* SLAVE, *with a letter and poison from* MASINISSA.

SLAVE, *kneeling.*

This, Madam, from the king, and this.

SOPHONISBA.

Ha!—Stay.—
[*Reads the letter.*

Rejoice, Phœnissa! Give me joy, my friend!
For here is liberty! my fears are vain:
The hand of Rome can never touch me more.
Hail! perfect freedom, hail!

PHOENISSA.

How? what? my queen!—
Ah! what is this? [*Pointing to the poison.*

SOPHONISBA.

The first of blessings—death.

PHOENISSA.

Alas! alas! can I rejoice in that?

SOPHONISBA.

Shift not thy colour at the sound of death;
For death appears not in a dreary light,
Seems not a blank to me, a loss of all
Those fond sensations, those enchanting dreams,
Which cheat a toiling world from day to day,
And form the whole of happiness they know.
It is to me perfection, glory, triumph.
Nay, fondly would I chuse it, tho' persuaded
It were a long dark night without a morning:
To bondage far prefer it, since it is
Deliverance from a world where Romans rule,
Where violence prevails.—And timely too,
Before my country falls; before I feel
As many stripes, as many chains, and deaths,
As there are lives in Carthage.—Glorious charter!
By which I hold immortal life and freedom,
Come, let me read thee once again; and then,
Obey the mandate. [*Reads the letter aloud.*

" MASINISSA *to his* QUEEN.

" The gods know with what pleasure I would have
" kept my faith to Sophonisba in another manner.—
" But since this fatal bowl alone can deliver thee from
" the Romans; call to mind thy father, thy country,
" that thou hast been the wife of two kings; and act
" up to the dictates of thy own heart. I will not long
" survive thee."

Oh, 'tis wondrous well!
Ye gods of death who rule the Stygian gloom!
Ye who have greatly dy'd! I come! I come!
I die contented, since I die a queen,
By Rome untouch'd, unsullied by their power;
So much their terror that I must not live.——
And thou, go tell the king, if this is all
The nuptial present he can send his bride,
I thank him for it; but that death had worn
An easier face, before I trusted him.—
Add, hither had he come, I could have taught
Him how to die.—I linger not, remember,
I stand not shivering on the brink of life;
And, but these votive drops, which grateful thus
[*Taking from him the poison.*
To Jove the high *Deliverer* I shed,
Assure him that I drank it, drank it all,
With an unalter'd smile.——Away. [*Drinks.*

Sophonisba, Act V. Scene VII.

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SCENE VIII.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

My friend!
In tears, my friend!—Dishonour not my death
With womanish complaints. Weep not for me;
Weep for thyself, Phœnissa, for thy country,
But not for me. There is a certain hour,
Which one would wish all undisturb'd and bright,
No care, no sorrow, no dejected passions;
And that is when we die, when hence we go,
Ne'er to be seen again; then let us spread
A bold exalted wing, and the last voice
We hear, be that of wonder and applause.

PHOENISSA.

Who with such virtue wishes not to die?

SOPHONISBA.

And is the sacred moment then so near?
The moment, when you sun, those heavens, this earth,
Hateful to me, polluted by the Romans,
And all the busy slavish race of men,
Shall sink at once; and strait another state,
New scenes, new joys, new faculties, new wonders,
Rise on a sudden round: but this the gods
In clouds and horror wrap, or none would live.—
Oh! to be there.—My breast begins to burn;
My tainted heart grows sick.—Ah me! Phœnissa!
How many virgins, infants, tender wretches!
Must feel these pangs, ere Carthage is no more.—

Soft, lead me to my couch.—My shivering limbs,
Do this last office, and then rest for ever.—
I pray thee weep not, pierce me not with groans.——
The king too here!—Nay then my death is full.

SCENE IX.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA, MASINISSA, LÆLIUS, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

Has Sophonisba drank this cursed bowl?—
Oh horror! horror! what a sight is here!

SOPHONISBA.

Had I not drank it, Masinissa, then
I had deserv'd it.

MASINISSA.

Exquisite distress!
Oh bitter, bitter fate! and this last hope
Completes my woe.

SOPHONISBA.

When will these ears be deaf
To misery's complaint? These eyes be blind
To mischief wrought by Rome?

MASINISSA.

To soon! too soon!
Ah! why so hasty? But a little while
Hadst thou delay'd this horrid draught, I then
Had been as happy as I now am wretched.

SOPHONISBA.

What means this talk of hope? of coward waiting?

MASINISSA.

What have I done? O Heavens! I cannot think
On my rash deed!—But while I talk, she dies!—
And how? what? where am I then?—Say, canst thou
Forgive me, Sophonisba?

SOPHONISBA.

Yes, and more,
More than forgive thee, thank thee, Masinissa.—
Hadst thou been weak, and dally'd with my freedom
Till by proud Rome enslav'd, that injury
I never had forgiven.

MASINISSA.

I came with life.
Lælius and I from Scipio hasted hither;
But death was here before us—this vile poison!

SOPHONISBA.

With life!—There was some merit in the poison;
But this destroys it all.—And couldst thou think
Me mean enough to take it?—Oh! Phœnissa!
This mortal toil is almost at an end.—
Receive my parting soul.

PHOENISSA.

Alas, my queen!

MASINISSA

Dies! dies! and scorns me!—Mercy, Sophonisba!
Grant one forgiving look, while yet thou canst;
Or death itself, the grave cannot relieve me:
But with the furies join'd, my frantic ghost

Will howl for ever.—Quivering! and pale!—
Have I done this!

SOPHONISBA.

But for Rome,
We might have been most happy.—I conjure thee,
Be mild to Syphax; for my sake regard him,
And let thy rage against him die with me.—
Farewell!—'Tis done!—O never, never, Carthage,
Shall I behold thee more. [*Dies.*

MASINISSA.

Dead! dead! oh! dead.—
Is there no death for me?

[*Snatches* Lælius's *sword to stab himself.*

LÆLIUS.

Hold, Masinissa!

MASINISSA.

And wouldst thou make a coward of me, Lælius?
Have me survive that murder'd excellence?—
Did she not stir?—Ha! who has shock'd my brain?
It whirls, it blazes!—Was it thou, old man?

NARVA.

Alas! alas!—good Masinissa, softly!—
Let me conduct thee to thy couch.

MASINISSA.

The grave
Shall be my couch.—Ye cannot make me live;
Ye strive in vain.—Off!—crowd not thus around me:
For I will hear, see, think no more!—Thou sun,
With-hold thy hated beams! And all I want
Of thee, kind earth, is an immediate grave!—

Ay, there she lies!—Why to that pallid sweetness
Cannot I, Nature, lay my lips, and die!

[*Throws himself beside her.*

LÆLIUS.

See there the ruins of the noble mind,
When, from calm Reason, Passion tears the sway.—
What pity she should perish!—Cruel war,
'Tis not the least misfortune in thy train,
That oft by thee the brave destroy the brave.—
She had a Roman soul; for every one
Who loves, like her, his country, is a Roman:
Whether on Afric's sandy plains he glows,
Or lives untam'd among Riphæan snows,
If generous liberty the breast inflame,
The gloomy Lybian then deserves that name;
And, warm with freedom, under frozen skies,
In farthest Britain, Romans yet may rise.

EPILOGUE.

BY A FRIEND.

SPOKEN BY MRS. CIBBER.

NOW, I'm afraid, the modest taste in vogue
Demands a strong, high-season'd epilogue:
Else might some silly soul take Pity's part,
And odious Virtue sink into the heart.

Our squeamish Author scruples this proceeding;
He says it hurts sound morals, and good breeding:
Nor Sophonisba would he here produce,
A glaring model of no private use.
Ladies, he bid me say, behold your Cato:
What tho' no Stoic she, nor read in Plato;
Yet sure she offer'd, for her country's sake,
A sacrifice which Cato could not make.—
Already, now, these wicked men are sneering,
Some wresting what one says, and others leering.
I vow they have not force for—public spirit;
That, ladies, must be your superior merit.

Mercy forbid! we should lay down our lives,
Like these old Punic, barbarous, heathen wives.—
Spare Christain blood; but sure the devil's in her,
Who for her country would not lose a pinner.—
Lard! how could such a creature shew her face?—
How?—just as you do there—thro' Brussels lace.
The Roman fair, the public in distress,
Gave up the dearest ornaments of dress;

How much more cheaply might you gain applause—
One yard of *ribband* and two ells of *gauze:*
And *gauze* each deap-read critic must adore;
Your Roman ladies dress'd in *gauze* all o'er.
Should you, fair patriots, come to dress so thin,
How clear might all your—sentiments be seen.
To foreign looms no longer owe your charms,
Nor make their trade more fatal than their arms:
Each British dame who courts her country's praise,
By quitting these *outlandish* modes, might raise
(Not from yon powder'd band, so thin and spruce!)
Ten able-bodied men for—public use.

But now a serious word about the play.—
Auspicious smile on this his first essay;
Ye generous *Britons!* your own sons inspire,
Let your applauses fan their native fire;
Then other *Shakespears* yet may rouse the stage,
And other *Otways* melt another age.

A

NUPTIAL SONG,

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN INSERTED IN THE FOURTH ACT.

COME, gentle Venus! and assuage
A warring world, a bleeding age:
For Nature lives beneath thy ray,
The wintry tempests haste away,
A lucid calm invests the sea,
Thy native deep is full of thee:
The flowering earth, where-e'er you fly,
Is all o'er spring, all sun the sky;
A genial spirit warms the breeze;
Unseen among the blooming trees,
The feather'd lovers tune their throat;
The desert growls a soften'd note;
Glad o'er the meads the cattle bound,
And love and harmony go round.

But chief into the human heart
You strike the dear delicious dart;
You teach us pleasing pangs to know,
To languish in luxurious woe,
To feel the generous passions rise,
Grow good by gazing, mild by sighs;
Each happy moment to improve,
And fill the perfect year with love.

Come, thou delight of heaven and earth!
To whom all creatures owe their birth;
Oh! come, sweet-smiling, tender, come,
And yet prevent our final doom.
For long the furious god of war
Has crush'd us with his iron car;
Has rag'd along our ruin'd plains,
Has soil'd them with his cruel stains;
Has sunk our youth in endless sleep,
And made the widow'd virgin weep:
Now let him feel thy wonted charms;
Oh! take him to thy twining arms;
And, while thy bosom heaves on his,
While deep he prints the humid kiss,
Ah! then his stormy heart control,
And sigh thyself into his soul.

EDWARD AND ELEONORA;

A

TRAGEDY.

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

MADAM,

IF I take the liberty, once more, to crave the protection of your ROYAL HIGHNESS for another Tragedy of my writing, it is because I am led almost unavoidably to it by my subject. In the character of ELEONORA I have endeavoured to represent, however faintly, a PRINCESS distinguished for all the virtues that render greatness amiable. I have aimed, particularly, to do justice to her inviolable affection and generous tenderness for a PRINCE, who was the darling of a great and free people.

Their descendants, even now, will own with pleasure how properly this address is made to your ROYAL HIGHNESS. I am, with the profoundest respect,

MADAM,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most humble, and

Most devoted Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

PROLOGUE.

BY A FRIEND.

IN former times, when fierce religious rage,
And priestly sway, deform'd each suffering age;
All manly wit, all useful learning, lay
In darkness lost, nor hop'd returning day.
Religion then was stain'd by cruel deeds,
And free-born Reason stoop'd to craft and creeds.
But happier we!—And tho' to-night we show
What fatal ills from blind devotion flow;
'Tis not that we such rage renew'd can fear,
Or dread the hand of persecution here.
Our scene would wide humanity impart;
Would breathe extensive candour thro' the heart;
Show true religion even to error kind,
And claim the perfect freedom of the mind.

If too the poet paints a noble strife
'Twixt the fond husband and the generous wife;
If all the father in *his* voice complains,
And all the mother in *her* tender strains;
If these best passions prompt the pleasing woe,
Indulge it freely——Nature bids it flow:
Where parent Nature leads, you cannot stray,
And what she wills, 'tis virtue to obey.

Fond of BRITANNIA's fame, and just to YOU,
He bids *old English honour* live anew,
And calls your great first EDWARD up to view.
But if his line too weak, his stroke too faint,
The graceful figure in full light to paint;
In candid part his honest meaning take,
And spare the poet for the hero's sake.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

EDWARD, Prince of England,	Mr. DELANE.
Earl of GLOSTER, - - -	Mr. ROSCO.
THEALD, Archdeacon of Liege,	Mr. ROBERTS.
SELIM, Sultan of Jaffa, -	Mr. RYAN.
ELEONORA, Princess of England,	Mrs. HORTON.
DARAXA, an Arabian Princess,	Mrs. HALLAM.

Assassin, Officers, &c.

SCENE, EDWARD's Tent in the Camp before Jaffa, a City on the Coast of Palestine.

EDWARD AND ELEONORA;

A

TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Prince EDWARD, THEALD *Archdeacon of* Liege, *Earl of* GLOSTER.

EDWARD.

I WILL no longer doubt. 'Tis plain, my friends,
That with our little band of English troops,
By all allies, all western powers deserted,
All but the noble knights that guard this land,
The flower of Europe and of Christian valour,
Nought can be done, nought worthy of our cause,
Worthy of England's heir, and of the name
Of *Lion-hearted* RICHARD; whose renown,
After almost a century elaps'd,
Shakes thro' its wide extent this eastern world.
What else could bend the Saracen to peace,
Who might, with better policy, refuse
To grant it us?—Yes, to the prince of Jaffa
I will accord the peace he has demanded:
And tho' my troops, impatient, wait the signal
To storm yon walls, yet will I not expose,

In vain attempts, valour that should be sav'd
For better days, and for the public welfare.
Rash fruitless war, from wanton glory wag'd,
Is only splendid murder.—What says, Theald?
Approves my reverend father of my purpose?

THEALD.

Edward, illustrious heir of England's crown,
I must indeed be blinded with the zeal
Of this our holy cause, to think your arms,
Thus all-forsaken, thus betray'd, sufficient
To reach the grandeur of your first design,
And, from the yoke of infidels, to free
The sacred city, object of our vows;
Yet this, methinks, this Jaffa might be seiz'd:
That still were something, an auspicious omen
Of future conquest.—But, unskill'd in war,
To you, my lord, and Gloster's wise experience,
I this submit.

EDWARD.

Speak, Gloster, your advice,
Before I fix my latest resolution.

GLOSTER.

You know, my lord, I never was a friend
To this crusado. My unchang'd advice
Is strenuous still for peace. Nor this I urge,
From our deserted arms, and cause betray'd,
But from the state of our unhappy country.
Behold her, Edward, with a filial eye,
And say, is this a time for these adventures?
Behold her then with deep commotion shook,
Beneath a false delusive face of quiet:
Behold her bleeding yet from civil war,

Exhausted, sunk; drain'd by ten thousand arts
Of lawless imposition, priestly fraud,
Italian leeches, and insatiate Rome;
That never rag'd before with such gross insult,
With such abandon'd avarice. Besides,
Who knows what evil counsellors, again,
Are gather'd round the throne!—In times like these,
Disturb'd, and low'ring with unsettled freedom,
One step to lawless power, one bold attempt
Renew'd, the least infringement of our charters,
Would in the giddy nation raise a tempest.—
Return, my prince. You have already sav'd
Your father from his foes, from haughty Leister:
Now save him from his ministers, from those
Who hold him captive in the worst of chains.

EDWARD.

You, Gloster, sav'd us both.

GLOSTER.

I did my duty;
Even while I join'd with Leister, did my duty—
I hope I did—He, who contends for freedom,
Can ne'er be justly deem'd his sovereign's foe:
No, 'tis the wretch that tempts him to subvert it,
The soothing slave, the traitor in the bosom,
Who best deserves that name; he is a worm
That eats out all the happiness of kingdoms.—
Edward, return; lose not a day, an hour,
Before this city. Tho' your cause be holy,
Believe me, 'tis a much more pious office,
To save your father's old and broken years,
His mild and easy temper, from the snares
Of low, corrupt, insinuating traitors:
A nobler office far! on the firm base

Of well-proportion'd liberty, to build
The common quiet, happiness, and glory
Of king and people, England's rising grandeur.
To you, my prince, this task, of right, belongs.
Has not the royal heir a juster claim
To share his father's inmost heart and counsels,
Than aliens to his int'rest, those, who make
A property, a market of his honour?—
One reason more allow me to suggest
For peace, immediate peace:—should blind misfortune,
In this far-distant hostile land, oppress us;
A chance to which our weakness stands expos'd;
What, Edward, of thy princess would become,
Thy Eleonora; she, whose tender love,
Thro' stormy seas and in fierce camps, attends thee?
What of thy blooming offspring?—Charg'd with these,
To give our courage scope were cruel rashness.

EDWARD.

Enough, my lord, I stand resolv'd on peace:
And will to England strait.—But where, alas!
Where shall we cover our inglorious heads;
When gay with hope the people round us press,
To hear by what exploits we have sustain'd
The fame of Richard, and of English valour?—
Shall I, my generous country, I be rank'd
With those weak princes, who consume thy wealth,
And sink thy name in idle expeditions?—
Perfidious France!—Be this the ruling point
Of my whole life and passion of my soul,
To humble thee, proud nation!—Mean time, Gloster,
See that the captive princess be restor'd,
Daraxa, to the sultan of this city,
Whose bride she is: we wage not war with women

SCENE II.

EDWARD, THEALD, GLOSTER, *an* OFFICER *belonging to the Prince.*

OFFICER.

One from the prince of Jaffa, Sir, demands
Your secret ear on some important message.

EDWARD.

Conduct him to my tent.—— [*Officer goes out.*
He brings, I judge,
The sultan's last instructions for this peace.
Here wait: I may your faithful counsel want.

SCENE III.

THEALD, GLOSTER.

THEALD.

Whatever woes, of late, have clouded England;
Yet must I, Gloster, call that nation happy,
On whose horizon smiles a dawning prince
Of Edward's worth and virtues.

GLOSTER.

True, my friend;
Edward has great, has amiable virtues;
That virtue chiefly which befits a prince—
He loves the people he must one day rule;
With fondness loves them, with a noble pride;
Esteems their good, esteems their glory his.
One instance it becomes me to recount,

That shews the genuine greatness of his soul.
Tho' I have met him in the bloody field,
He fighting for his father, I for freedom;
Yet bears his bosom no remaining grudge
Of those distracted times; to me his heart
Is greatly reconcil'd.—Virtue! beyond
The little unforgiving soul of tyrants!
Now will I tell thee, Theald, whence I stoop
To wear the gaudy chains of court-attendance,
At these grey years, that should in calm retirement
Pass the soft evening of a bustling life,
And plume my parting soul for better worlds.
Amidst his many virtues, youthful Edward
Is lofty, warm, and absolute of temper:
I therefore seek to moderate his heat,
To guide his fiery virtues, that, misled
By dazzling power and flattering sycophants,
Might finish what his father's weaker measures
Have try'd in vain. And hence I here attend him,
In expeditions which I ne'er approv'd,
In holy wars—your pardon, reverend father—
I must declare I think such wars the fruit
Of idle courage, or mistaken zeal,
Sometimes of rapine and religious rage,
To every mischief prompt.

THEALD.

You wrong, my lord,
You wrong them much. To set this matter only
Upon a civil footing: say, what right
Had robbers rushing from Arabian deserts,
Fierce as the suns that kindled up their rage,
Thus, in a barbarous torrent, to bear down

All Asia, Afric, and profane their altars?—
And to repel brute force by force is just.
Nay, does not even our duty, int'rest, glory,
The common honour of the Christian name,
Require us to repress their wild ambition,
That labours westward still, and threatens Europe?

GLOSTER.

Yes, when they burst their limits, let us check them:
And with a firmer hand than those loose Christians,
The most corrupt and abject of mankind,
Slaves, doubly slaves, who suffer'd these Arabians,
In virtue their superiors as in valour,
Without resistance to o'er-run the world.
By rage and zeal, 'tis true, their empire rose:
But now some settled ages of possession
Create a right, than which, I fear, few nations
Can shew a better. Sure I am 'tis madness,
Inhuman madness, thus, from half the world,
To drain its blood and treasure, to neglect
Each art of peace, each care of government!
And all for what?—By spreading desolation,
Rapine and slaughter o'er the other half,
To gain a conquest we can never hold.—
I venerate this land. Those sacred hills,
Those vales, those cities, trod by saints and prophets,
By GOD himself! the scenes of heavenly wonders,
Inspire me with a certain awful joy.
But the same GOD, my friend, pervades, sustains,
Surrounds and fills this universal frame;
And every land where spreads his vital presence,
His all-enlivening breath, to me is holy.—
Excuse me, Theald, if I go too far:
I meant alone to say, I think these wars

A kind of persecution. And when that,
That most absurd and cruel of all vices,
Is once begun, where shall it find an end?
Each in his turn, or has or claims a right
To wield its dagger, to return its furies;
And, first or last, they fall upon ourselves.

EDWARD, *behind the Scenes.*

Inhuman villain! is thy message murder?

THEALD.

Ha! heard you not the prince exclaiming murder?

GLOSTER.

Should this barbarian messenger—
[*Moving towards the noise.*
'Tis so!

SCENE IV.

THEALD, GLOSTER; *to them Prince* EDWARD, *wounded in the arm, and dragging in the assassin.*

EDWARD.

Detested wretch! and does the prince of Jaffa
Send base assassins to transact his treaties?
There—take thy answer, ruffian!—
[*Stabs him with the dagger he had wrested from him.*
Blow too hasty!
I should have sav'd thee for a fitter death.

ASSASSIN.

I would have triumph'd, Christian, in thy rage.
For know, thou vile destroyer of the faithful!
That tho' my erring dagger miss'd thy heart,

Yet has it fir'd thy veins with mortal poison,
Whose very touch is death.—ALLAH be prais'd!
O glorious fate! Prophet, receive my soul! [*Dies.*

EDWARD, *after a short pause.*

Why gaze you with amazement on each other?
Are we not men, to whom the various chances
Of life are known?

GLOSTER.

Ha! poison did he say?
Then is at once my prince and country lost!—
O fatal wound to England!

THEALD.

Quick, my lord,
Retire and have it drest without delay,
Ere the fell poison can diffuse its rage,
And deeply taint your blood.

EDWARD.

The princess comes!
O save me from her tenderness!

SCENE V.

EDWARD, THEALD, GLOSTER; *to them the Princess* ELEONORA.

ELEONORA.

My Edward!
Support me!—Oh!

EDWARD.

She faints—My Eleonora!
Look up, and bless me with thy gentle eyes!—

The colour comes, her cheeks resume their beauty,
And all her charms revive.—Hence spurn that carcase;
A sight too shocking for my Eleonora.

ELEONORA.

And lives my Edward, lives my dearest lord,
From this assassin sav'd?—Alas! you bleed!

EDWARD.

'Tis nought, my lovely princess—A slight wound.

ELEONORA.

But, ah! methought, I entering heard of poison
Tainting the blood—What! was the dagger poison'd?—
Ha! silent all? will none relieve my fears?—

GLOSTER.

Madam, restrain your tenderness a moment—
The prince delays too long—Let him retire.
Meanwhile, the troubled camp shall be my care;
Lest the base foe should make a sudden sally,
While yet our troops are stunn'd with this disaster.

EDWARD.

I thank thee, noble Gloster.—Nor alone
Support my troops; go, rouse them to revenge;
Tell them their injur'd prince will try their love,
Their valour soon.—And you, my friend, good Theald,
Attend the princess.—Chear thee, Eleonora!
I cannot, will not, leave thee long, to vex
Thy tender soul with aggravated fears.

THEALD.

Behold Daraxa, the false sultan's bride.

SCENE VI.

ELEONORA, THEALD, DARAXA.

DARAXA.

Princess of England, let me share thy grief.
Whence flow these tears? and what this wild alarm,
This noise of murder and assassination?

ELEONORA.

Alas! the prince is wounded by a ruffian;
And with a poison'd dagger, as I fear,
Yet none will ease me of this racking thought.—
Nay, tell me, Theald, since to know the worst
Is oft a kind of miserable comfort,
What has befall'n the prince? For this slight wound
Could never thus o'ercast the brave with terror.

THEALD.

I dare not, princess, dally with your fate.
An impious villain, from the sultan Selim,
Pretended to the prince a secret message
About the peace in treaty. Dreading nought,
He left us here, and to his tent retir'd,
There to receive this execrable envoy.
Straight with the prince alone, the fierce assasin
Attempted on his life; but, in his arm
He took, it seems, the blow, and from the villain
Wresting the dagger, plung'd it to his heart.
This last we saw; and heard the inhuman bigot,
Who deem'd himself a martyr in their cause,
Boast, as he dy'd, the prince's wound was poison'd.

ELEONORA.

Then all I fear'd is true! then am I wretched
Beyond even hope!

DARAXA.

A villain from the sultan!—

ELEONORA.

Ah the distracting thought! And is my life!
My love! my Edward! on the brink of fate!
Of fate that may this moment snatch him from me!

DARAXA.

What! Selim send assasins? and beneath
A name so sacred? Selim, whose renown
Is incense breathing o'er the sweeten'd east;
For each humane, each generous virtue fam'd;
Selim! the rock of faith! and sun of honour!

ELEONORA.

O complicated woe! The Christain cause
Has now no more a patron and restorer;
England no more a prince, in whom she plac'd
Her glory, her delight, her only hope;
These desolated troops no more a chief;
No more a husband, a protector, I,
A friend, a lover! and my helpless children
No more a father!

DARAXA.

Pardon, gentle princess,
If in this whirlwind of revolving passions,
That snatch my soul by turns, I have forgot

To pay the tribute which I owe thy sorrows—
But I myself, alas! am more unhappy!

ELEONORA.

What woes can equal mine? who lose, thus vilely,
The best! the bravest! loveliest of mankind!—

DARAXA.

You only *lose* the man you love, but I
(O insupportable!) must learn to *hate*,
To *scorn* what once was all my pride and transport!
Should Edward die by this accursed crime,
(Which Heaven forbid!) he dies admir'd, belov'd,
In the full bloom of fame and spotless honour.
To you, the daughter of illustrious grief,
Your tears remain, and sadly-sweet reflection;
You with his image, with his virtues, still,
Amidst the pensive gloom, may converse hold:—
While I—ah! nothing meets my blasted sight
But a black view of infamy and horror!
What is the loss of life to loss of virtue?
And yet how can this heavenly spark be lost?—
No! virtue burns with an immortal flame.
He is bely'd—some villain has abus'd him.

THEALD.

I honour, Madam, this your virtuous grief:
But that the sultan did employ th' assassin,
Is past all doubt—behold the false instructions,
By which he gain'd admittance.
[*Giving her the letter the prince had dropt.*

DARAXA.

Ha!—'Tis so!—
His hand! his seal!—From my detesting heart,

I tear him thus for ever!—Perish, Selim!
Perish the feeble wretch who more bewails him!
That were to share his guilt!—Unhappy princess!
Now let me turn my soul to thy assistance—
There is a cure, 'tis true——

ELEONORA.

A cure, Daraxa!
O say, what cure?

DARAXA.

No; it avails not, Madam;
None can be found to risque it.

ELEONORA.

None to risque it?
Quick tell me what it is, my dear Daraxa.

DARAXA.

To find some person, that, with friendly lip,
May draw the poison forth; at least, its rage
And mortal spirit. This will bring the wound
Within the power of art: but certain death
Attends the generous deed.

ELEONORA, *kneeling.*

Then hear me, Heaven!
Prime source of love! Ye saints and angels, hear me!
I here devote me for the best of men,
Of princes, and of husbands. On this cross
I seal the cordial vow: confirm it Heaven!
And grant me courage in the hour of trial!

THEALD.

O tenderness unequall'd!

DARAXA.

Glorious princess!

ELEONORA.

Go, Theald, quickly find the earl of Gloster,
And with him break this matter to the prince.
As for the person, leave that task to me.
I with Daraxa will your call attend:—
O all ye powers of love! your influence lend.

ACT II. SCENE I.

GLOSTER, THEALD.

GLOSTER.

NO, Theald, no; he never will consent—
I know him well; he ne'er will purchase life,
At such a rate: besides, in aid of love,
His generous pride would come, and deem it baseness.

THEALD.

Then is yon sun his last. The blackening wound
Begins already to confess the poison:
Meantime, my lord, both friendship and our duty
Demand, at least, the trial. Well I know
That, poise his life with hers, he would as nothing
Esteem his own: but sure the life of thousands,
The mingled cause at once of heaven and earth,
Should o'er the best the dearest life prevail.

GLOSTER.

Alas! my friend, you *reason*, Edward *loves*.
How weak the head contending with the heart!
Yet be the trial made.—Behold, he comes.

SCENE II.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD.

EDWARD, *entering*.

O thou bright sun! now hast'ning to those climes,
That parent-isle, which I no more shall see;
And for whose welfare oft my youthful heart

Has vainly form'd so many a fond design;
O thither bear, resplendent orb of day,
To that dear spot of earth, my last farewel!——
And oh! eternal Providence, whose course,
Amidst the various maze of life, is fix'd
By boundless wisdom, and by boundless love,
I follow thee, with resignation, hope,
With confidence and joy; for thou art good,
And of thy rising goodness is no end!——
Well met, my dearest friends.—It was too true,
The villain's threatning, and I nearly touch
That awful hour which every man must prove,
Yet every man still shifts at distance from him.
Come then, and let us fill the space between
These last important moments, whence we take
Our latest tincture for eternity,
With solemn converse and exalting friendship.—
Nay—Theald—Gloster—wound me not with tears,
With tears that fall o'er venerable cheeks!
What could the princess more?—Ah! there, indeed,
At every thought of her, I feel a weight,
A dreadful weight of tenderness, that shakes
My firmest resolution.—Where is she?

THEALD.

She burns with fond impatience to attend you.

EDWARD.

And how, brave Gloster, did you leave the camp?

GLOSTER.

The camp, Sir, is secure: each soldier there
From indignation draws new force and spirit.
O 'tis a glorious, an affecting sight!
Those furrow'd cheeks that never knew before

The dew of tears, now in a copious shower
Are bath'd. Around your tent they, anxious, crowd,
Rank over rank: some pressing for a look;
Some sadly musing, with dejected eye;
Some, on their knees, preferring vows to heaven;
And, with extended arm, some breathing vengeance.
" Base Saracens," they cry, " perfidious cowards!—
" But blood shall wash out blood.—Ah! poor atonement,
" Did the whole bleeding city fall a victim!"

EDWARD.

Alas, that to repay their faithful love
I cannot live!—Yet moderate their zeal;
And let the sword of justice only strike
The faithless Selim and his guilty council.
My new-departed spirit, just escap'd
From the low fev'rish passions of this life,
Would grieve to see the blood of innocence,
With that of guilt confounded, stain my tomb.

THEALD.

Permit me, Sir, the hope, that you yourself—
I speak it on just cause—may live to punish
This breach of all the sacred rights of men.

EDWARD.

Why will you turn my thoughts, from earth enlarg'd,
To soft enfeebling views of life again?

THEALD.

Not to a vain desire of life, my lord,
I would recal them; but inspire each hope,
Advise each possibility to save it.
And there is yet a remedy.

EDWARD.

Delusion!

THEALD.

The fair Arabian princess mention'd one.

EDWARD.

She one?—Daraxa?—Something to complete
Her lover's crime.

THEALD.

You could not wrong her thus
Had you beheld the tempest of her soul,
Her grief, her rage, confusion, when she heard
Of Selim's baseness; had you seen that honour,
That glorious fire which darted from her eyes;
Till in a flood of virtuous sorrow sunk,
She almost equall'd Eleonora's tears.

EDWARD.

What was it she propos'd?

THEALD.

It was, my lord,
To find some person, who, with friendly lip,
Might draw the deadly spirit.——

EDWARD.

I have heard
Of such a cure: but is it not, good Theald,
An action fatal to the kind performer?

THEALD

Yes, surely fatal.

EDWARD.

Name it then no more.
I should despise the paltry life it purchas'd.
Besides, what mortal can dispose so rashly
Of his own life? Talk not of low condition,
And of my public rank: when life or death

Becomes the question, all distinctions vanish:
Then the first monarch, and the lowest slave,
On the same level stand; in this the sons
Of equal Nature all.

THEALD.

Allow me, Sir,
If 'tis a certain, an establish'd duty
(Than duty more, the height of human virtue),
To sacrifice a transitory life,
For that kind source from whence it is deriv'd,
And all its guarded joys, our dearest country;
It may be justly sacrific'd for those
On whom depends the welfare of the public.
And there is one, my lord, who stands devoted,
By solemn and irrevocable vows,
To die for you.

EDWARD

To die for me!—Kind Nature!
Thanks to thy forming hand, I can myself
Chearful sustain to pay this debt I owe thee,
Without the borrow'd sufferings of another.—
No, Theald, urge this argument no more.
I love not life to that degree, to purchase,
By the sure death of some brave guiltless friend,
A few uncertain days, that often rise
Like this, serene and gay, when, with swift wing,
A moment wraps them in disastrous fate.

GLOSTER.

Did we consult to save your single life,
Was that the present question, thy refusal
Were just, were generous. But, my lord, this person,
Who stands for you devoted, should, in that,
Be deem'd devoted for the Christian cause,

The common cause of Europe and thy country;
Dies for the brave companions of thy fortune,
Who weeping now around thy tent, conjure thee
To live for them, and England's promis'd glory.
O save our country, Edward! save a nation,
The chosen land, the last retreat of freedom,
Amidst a world enslav'd!—Cast back thy view,
And trace from farthest times her old renown:
Think of the blood that, to maintain her rights,
And guard her sheltering laws, has flow'd in battle,
Or on the patriot's scaffold: think what cares,
What vigilance, what toils, what bright contention,
In councils, camps, and well-disputed senates,
It cost our generous ancestors, to raise
A matchless plan of freedom: whence we shine,
Even in the jealous eye of hostile nations,
The happiest of mankind.—Then see all this,
This virtue, wisdom, toil, and blood of ages,
Behold it ready to be lost for ever.
In this important, this decisive hour,
On thee, and thee alone, our weeping country
Turns her distressful eye; to thee she calls,
And with a helpless parent's piercing voice.—
Wilt thou not live for her? for her subdue
A graceful pride I own, but still a pride,
That more becomes thy courage and thy youth,
Than birth and public station? Nay, for her,
Say, wouldst thou not resign the dearest passions?

EDWARD.

O, there is nothing, which for thee, my country,
I, in my proper person, could not suffer!
But thus to sculk behind another's life,
'Tis what I have not courage to support;
It makes a kind of coward of me, Gloster.—

But let me see this friend, whose generous virtue
Exceeds what even my favourable thoughts
Had imag'd in the selfish race of man.
The purpose claims the merit of the deed;
And ere I die, I must requite his friendship.—
Conduct him hither, Theald.

SCENE III.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

EDWARD.

Ah, my Gloster,
You have not touch'd on something that here pleads
For longer life, beyond the force of reason,
Perhaps too powerful pleads—my Eleonora!
To thee, my friend, I will not be asham'd
Even to avow my love in all its fondness.
For oh there shines in this my dearer self!
This partner of my soul! such a mild light
Of careless charms, of unaffected beauty,
Such more than beauty, such endearing goodness,
That when I meet her eye, where cordial faith,
And every gentle virtue mix their lustre,
I feel a transport that partakes of anguish!
How shall I then behold her, on the point
To leave her, Gloster, in a distant land?
For ever in a stormy world to leave her?—
There is no misery to be fear'd like that
Which from our greatest happiness proceeds.

SCENE IV.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD *presenting the princess* ELEONORA *as the person he went to bring*, DARAXA.

EDWARD.

O Heaven!—what do I see?—I am betrayed!—
[*Turning away.*

ELEONORA.

Edward!

EDWARD.

O 'tis too much! O spare me, Nature!

ELEONORA.

Not look upon me, Edward?

EDWARD.

Eleonora!
How on this dreadful errand canst thou come?

ELEONORA.

Behold me kneel—

EDWARD.

Why kneel you, best of women?
You ne'er offended, ne'er in thought offended:
Thou art all truth, and love, and angel-goodness!
Why do you kneel? O rise, my Eleonora!

ELEONORA.

Let my fulfil my vow.

EDWARD.

O never! never!

ELEONORA.

Let me preserve a life, in which is wrapt
The life of thousands, dearer than my own!
Live thou, and let me die for thee, my Edward!

EDWARD.

For me!—thy words are daggers to my soul.
And wouldst thou have me then thus meanly save
A despicable life? a life expos'd
To that worst torment, to my own contempt!
A life still haunted by the cruel image,
Of thy last pangs, thy agonizing throws,
The dire convulsions of these tender limbs:
And all for one—O infamy!—for one,
By love, by duty bound, each manly tie,
Even by a peasant's honour, to protect thee?—
Yet this, tho' strong, invincible, is nought
To what my wounded tenderness could urge
Against thy dire request—But should Fate demand
The life we love, then, then, we must exert
The greatest act of human resignation,
We must submit.—But wouldst thou have me, say,
Doom thee myself? with voluntary choice,
Nay, by a barbarous crime, untimely snatch
This worst of ills? would Eleonora make me
Of all mankind the most completely wretched?

ELEONORA.

Plead not the voice of honour. Well I know,
There is no danger, pain, no form of death,
Thou wouldst not meet with transport to protect me.
But I, alas! an unimportant woman,
Whose only boast and merit is to love thee;
Ah, what am I, with nameless numbers weigh'd?

With myriads yet unborn?—All ranks, all ages,
All arts, all virtues, all a state comprizes?
These have a higher claim to thy protection.
Live then for them.—O make a generous effort!
What none but heroes can, bid the soft passions
The private stoop to those that grasp the public.
Live to possess the pleasure of a god,
To bless a people trusted to thy care.
Live to fulfil thy long career of glory,
But just begun. To die for thee be mine.
I ne'er can find a brighter, happier fate:
And fate will come at last, inglorious fate!
O grudge me not a portion of thy fame!
As join'd in love, O raise me to thy glory!

EDWARD.

In vain is all thy eloquence. The more
Thou wouldst persuade, I with increasing horror
Fly from thy purpose.

ELEONORA.

Dost thou love me, Edward?

EDWARD

Oh!—If I love thee?—Witness heaven and earth!
Angels of death that hover round me, witness;
Witness these blinded eyes, these trembling arms,
This heart that beats unutterable fondness,
To what an agony I love thee.—

ELEONORA.

Then
Thou sure wilt save me from the worst of pains.

EDWARD.

O that I could from all engross thy sufferings!
Pain felt for thee were pleasure!

ELEONORA.

Hear me, Edward.
I speak the strictest truth, no flight of passion,
I speak my naked heart.—To die, I own,
Is a dread passage, terrible to Nature,
Chiefly to those who have, like me, been happy.—
But to survive thee—O, 'tis greatly worse!
'Tis a continual death!—I cannot bear
The very thought.—O leave me not behind thee!

EDWARD.

Since nought can alter my determin'd breast,
Why dost thou pierce me with this killing image?

ELEONORA.

Ah! selfish that thou art! with thee the toil,
The tedious toil of life will soon be o'er;
Thou soon wilt hide thee in the quiet grave:
While I, a lonely widow, with my orphans,
Am left defenceless to a troubled world,
A false, ungrateful, and injurious world!—
Oh! if thou lov'st me, Edward, I conjure thee,
By that celestial flame which blends our souls!
By all a father, all a mother feels!
By every holy tenderness, I charge thee!
Live to protect the pledges of our love,
Our children.

EDWARD.

Oh!——

ELEONORA

Our young, our helpless—

EDWARD.

Oh!—
Distraction!—Let me go!

ELEONORA.

Nay, drag me with thee
To the kind tomb.—Thou canst not leave our children,
Expos'd, by being thine, beyond the lowest!
Surrounded with the perils of a throne!—

EDWARD.

Cruel! no more embitter thus our last,
Our parting moments! Set no more the terrors
Of these best passions in array against me;
For by that Power, I swear, Father of life!
Whose universal love embraces all
That breathes this ample air; whose perfect wisdom
Brings light from darkness, and from evil good;
To whom I recommend thee, and my children:—
By him I swear! I never will submit
To what thy horrid tenderness proposes!

GLOSTER.

My lord—

EDWARD.

Oh!—these emotions are too much—
I feel a heavy languor steal upon me:
The working poison clogs the springs of life.—
Conduct me to my couch,—Ah! Eleonora.
If we ne'er meet again—this one embrace—
Yet sink not to despair—Heaven may preserve me
By means superior to all human hope.

ELEONORA.

I will not, cannot quit thee!—

SCENE V.

ELEONORA, DARAXA.

DARAXA.

Princess, stay.
Think not the hand of death is yet upon him;
Resistless sleep will first oppress his senses,
Before the last convulsive pangs come on;
For so the numbing poison oft begins
To spread its dark malignity.

ELEONORA.

Ha!—Sleep?—
Then is the time—Thanks to inspiring Heaven!
But come, and ere the venom sink too deep,
Swift let me seize the favouring hour of sleep.

ACT III. SCENE I.

GLOSTER.

O Miracle of love! O wond'rous princess!
'Tis such as thou, who keep the gentle flame
That animates society alive;
Who make the dwellings of mankind delightful.
What is vain life? an idle flight of days,
A still-delusive round of sickly joys,
A scene of little cares and trifling passions,
If not ennobled by such deeds of virtue!—
And yet this matchless virtue, what avails it?
Th' afflicting angel has forsook the prince,
And now pours out his terrors on the princess.—
Forsook him, said I?—No; he must awake
To keener evils than the body knows,
Which minds alone, and generous minds, can feel.
O Virtue! Virtue! as thy joys excel,
So are thy woes transcendent; the gross world
Knows not the bliss or misery of either.——
The prince forsakes his couch—He seems renew'd
In health—Ah, short deceitful gleam of ease!

SCENE II.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

EDWARD, *advancing from his couch.*

Hail to the fresher earth and brighter day!
I feel me lighten'd of the mortal load
That lay upon my spirits. This kind sleep

Has shed a balmy quiet thro' my veins.
Whence this amazing change?——
But be my first chief care, Author of good!
To bend my soul in gratitude to thee!
Thou, when blind mortals wander thro' the deeps
Of comfortless despair, with timely hand,
Invisible, and by unthought-of ways,
Thus lead'st them forth into thy light again.

GLOSTER.

How fares my lord the prince?

EDWARD.

To health restor'd.
Only a kind of lassitude remains,
A not unpleasing weakness hangs upon me:
Like the soft trembling of the settled deep
After a storm.

GLOSTER.

Father of health be prais'd!

EDWARD.

The moment that I sunk upon my couch,
A sick and troubled slumber fell upon me:
Chaos of gloomy unconnected thought!
That in black eddy whirl'd, made sleep more dreadful
Than the worst waking pang. While thus I toss'd,
Ready to bid farewel to suffering clay,
Methought an angel came and touch'd my wound.
At this the parting gloom clear'd up apace;
My slumbers soften'd; and, with health, return'd
Serenity of mind, and order'd thought,
And fair ideas gladdening all the soul.
Aërial music too, by fancy heard,
Sooth'd my late pangs and harmoniz'd my breast.
Thro' shades of bliss I walk'd, where heavenly forms

Sung to their lutes my Eleonora's love.—
But where is she! the glory of her sex?
O dearer, justly dearer far than ever!
Quick, let me find her, pour into her bosom
My full, full soul, with tenderness o'ercharg'd,
With glad surprise, with gratitude and wonder.——
Ha! why this silence? this dejected look?—
You cast a drooping eye upon the ground.—
Where is the princess?

GLOSTER.

She, my lord, reposes.

EDWARD.

Reposes!—No!—It is not likely, Gloster,
That she would yield her weeping eyes to sleep,
While I lay there in agonies.—Away!
I am too feeble then to know the truth.—
Say, is she well?

GLOSTER.

Now shew thy courage, Edward.—

EDWARD.

O all my fears! I shall start out to madness!—
What!—while I slept?

GLOSTER.

Yes.

EDWARD.

Misery! distraction!
My peace, my honour is betray'd for ever!
O love! O shame! O murder'd Eleonora!

SCENE III.

GLOSTER.

Unhappy prince! go find thy Eleonora,
And in heart-easing grief exhale thy passion:
All other comfort, now, were to talk down
The winds and raging seas.—But yonder comes
Th' Arabian princess: from her tears I learn
The moving scene within.

SCENE IV.

GLOSTER, DARAXA, *a messenger from* SELIM, *attending at some distance.*

DARAXA.

O! 'tis too much!
I can no more support it.

GLOSTER.

Generous mourner,
How is it with the princess Eleonora?

DARAXA.

Struck by the poison, on her couch she lies,
A rose soft-drooping in Sabæan vales,
Beneath the fiery dog-star's noxious rage.
O Christain chief! I never shall forget
The scene these melting eyes have just beheld,
With mingled tears of tenderness and wonder.

GLOSTER.

How was it, Madam?

DARAXA.

When this pride of women,
This best of wives which in his radiant course
The sun beholds, when first she, sickening, felt
The imperious summons of approaching fate,
All rob'd in spotless white she sought the altar;
And, prostrate there, for her departing soul,
The prince her husband, and her orphan-children,
Implor'd th' Eternal Mind.—As yet she held
Her swelling tears, and in her bosom kept
Her sighs repress'd: nor did the near approach
Of the pale king of terrors dim her beauty;
No, rather adding to her charms, it breath'd
A certain mournful sweetness thro' her features.
But as th' increasing bane more desperate grew,
Wild to her bed she rush'd, and then, indeed,
The lovely fountains of her eyes were open'd;
Then flow'd her tears.—" Connubial bed," she cry'd,
" Chaste witness of my tenderness for him
" To save whose life I unrepining die
" In bloom of youth, farewell!—Thou shalt, perhaps,
" Receive a fairer, a more happy bride;
" But never a more faithful, never one
" Who loves her husband with a fonder passion."—
Here flow'd her tears afresh; with burning lip
She press'd the humid couch, and wept again.
At last, while weary sorrow paus'd, she rose,
And, fearing lest immediate death might seize her,
Demanded to be led to see the prince;
But fear of chasing from his eyes too soon
The salutary sleep that heal'd his pangs,
Restrain'd her trembling footsteps. On her couch,
Abandon'd to despair, she sunk anew,
And for her children call'd.—Her children came,

Awhile, supported on her arm, she ey'd them,
With tears pursuing tears a-down her cheek,
With all the speechless misery of woe.—
I see her still—O God!—the powerful image
Dissolves me into tears!—

GLOSTER.

Madam, proceed.
Such tears are virtue, and excel the joys
Of wanton pride.

DARAXA.

Then, starting up, she went
To snatch them to a mother's last embrace;
When strait reflecting that the piercing poison
Might taint their tender years, she sudden shrunk
With horror back:—" O wretched Eleonora!
" (She weeping cry'd) and must I then not taste
" The poor remaining comfort of the dying,
" To see a husband, clasp my dearest children,
" And mix my parting soul with theirs I love?"—
Her sad attendants, that till then had mourn'd
In silent sorrow, all at this gave way
To loud laments.—She rais'd her languid eye,
And casting on them round a gracious smile,
To each by name she call'd, even to the lowest,
To each extended mild her friendly hand,
Gave, and by turns receiv'd, a last farewell.—
Such is the dreadful scene from which I come.

GLOSTER.

How heighten'd now with Edward's mingled woes!
Why are my lingering years reserv'd for this?

DARAXA.

Come nearer, you, the messenger of Selim,
And bear him back this answer:—His chief aim,

He says, in stooping to solicit peace,
Was from the chains of infidels to save me.
What! was it then to rescue me he sent,
Beneath an all-rever'd and sacred name,
Beneath the shelter of his hand and seal,
A murdering wretch, a sacrilegious bigot,
To stab at once the gallant prince of England,
And public faith? nay, with a poison'd dagger
(Such his inhuman cowardice) to stab him?—
So well, 'tis true, he judg'd; the Christian prince
Had now been mingled with the harmless dead,
If his bright princess, glorious Eleonora,
Had not redeem'd his dearer life with her's.
You heard in what extremity she lies.
Go, tell the tyrant then—O heaven and earth!
O vanity of virtue! that Daraxa
Should e'er to Selim send so fell a message——
I will suppress its bitterness—Yet tell him,
This crime has plac'd eternal bars between us.
See my last tear to love——Arabian wilds
Shall bury 'midst their rocks the lost Daraxa.—
Away!

GLOSTER.

Behold, they bear this way the princess,
Once more to taste the sweetness of the sun,
Ere yet to mortal light she bid farewell.

SCENE V.

GLOSTER, DARAXA, THEALD, EDWARD; ELEONORA, *borne in by her attendants, on a couch.*

ELEONORA, *entering.*

A little on, a little further on,
Bear me, my friends, into the cooling air.—
O chearful sun! O vital light of day!

EDWARD.

That sun is witness of our matchless woes,
Is witness of our innocence——Alas!
What have we done to merit this disaster?

ELEONORA.

O earth! O genial roofs! O the dear coast
Of Albion's isle! which I no more shall see!—

EDWARD.

Nay, yield not to thy weakness, Eleonora!
Sustain thyself a little, nor desert me!
Th' all-ruling Goodness may relieve us still.

ELEONORA.

Edward! I tremble! terror seizes on me!
Thro' the rent veil of yon surrounding sky,
I had a glimpse, I saw th' eternal world;
They call, they urge me hence—Yes, I obey.
But O forgive me, Heaven! if 'tis with pain,
With agonies, I tear my soul from his!

EDWARD.

Heavens! what I suffer!—How thy plaintive voice
Shoots anguish thro' my soul!

ELEONORA.

Some power unseen—
Thy hand, my Edward—some dark power unseen
Is dragging me away.—O yet a little,
A little spare me!—Ah! how shall I leave
My weeping friends, my husband and my children?

EDWARD.

Unhappy friends! O greatly wretched husband!
And O poor careless orphans, who not feel
The depth of your misfortune!

ELEONORA.

Lay me down;
Soft, lay me down—my powers are all dissolv'd—
A little forward bend me—Oh!

EDWARD.

Oh Heaven!
How that soft frame is torn with cruel pangs!
Pangs robb'd from me!

ELEONORA.

'Tis thence they borrow ease—
My childen! O my children! you no more
Have now a mother: now, alas! no more
Have you a mother, O my hapless children!

EDWARD.

What do I hear! What desolating words
Are these? more bitter than a thousand deaths!
Death to my soul! Call up thy failing spirit,
And leave me not to misery and ruin!

ELEONORA.

Edward, I feel an interval of ease:
And, ere I die, have something to impart
That will relieve my sufferings.

EDWARD.

Speak, my soul!
Speak thy desire: I live but to fulfil it.

ELEONORA.

Thou seest in what a hopeless state I lie;
I who this morning rose in pride of youth,
High-blooming, promis'd many happy years:
I die for thee, I self-devoted die.
Think not, from this, that I repent my vow:
Or that, with little vanity, I boast it:
No; what I did from unrepenting love,
I chearful did, from love that knows no fear,
No pain, no weak remission of its ardour.
And what, alas! what was it but the dictate
Of honour and of duty? nay, 'twas selfish,
To save me from unsufferable pain,
From dragging here a wretched life without thee.
Two fears yet stand betwixt my soul and peace.
One is for thee, lest thou disturb my grave
With tears of wild despair. Grieve not like those
Who have no hope. We yet shall meet again;
We still are in a kind Creator's hand;
Eternal Goodness reigns. Besides, this parting,
This parting, Edward, must have come at last,
When years of friendship had, perhaps, exalted
Our love, if that can be, to keener anguish.
Think what thy station, what thy fame demanded;
Nor yield thy virtue even to worthy passions.
My other care—my other care is idle—
From that thy equal tenderness with mine,
Thy love and generosity secure me—
Our children—

EDWARD.

Yes, I penetrate thy fear.
But hear me, dying sweetness! On this hand,
This cold pale hand I vow, our children never,
Shall never call another by the name
Sacred to thee; my Eleonora's children
Shall never feel the hateful power thou fear'st.
As one in life, so death cannot divide us.
Nor high descent, nor beauty, nought that woman,
In her unbounded vanity of heart,
Can wish, shall ever tempt my faith from thee.
Shall ever, said I? Piteous boast indeed!
O nothing *can!*—I should be gross of heart,
Tasteless and dull as earth, to think with patience,
Without abhorrence, of a second Hymen.
Where can I find such beauty? Where such grace,
The soul of beauty? where such winning charms?
Where such a soft divinity of goodness?
Such faith? such love? such tenderness unequall'd?
Such all that Heaven could give—to make me wretched!—
Talk not of comfort—Into what a gulph,
A lone abyss of misery I fall,
The moment that I lose thee—Oh! I know not—
I dare not think!—But these unhappy orphans—
Ah! the dire cause that makes it double duty—
Shall now be doubly mine; to shelter them,
These pledges of our love, I will attempt
To brave the horrors of loath'd life without thee.

ELEONORA.

Enough! it is enough!—On this condition
Receive them from my hands.

EDWARD.

Dear hands! dear gift!
Dear, precious, dying, miserable gift!
With transport once receiv'd, but now with anguish!

ELEONORA.

All-soft'ning time will heal thy woes. The dead
Soon leave the passions of the living free.

EDWARD.

Detested life!—O take me, take me with thee!

ELEONORA.

No, Edward, live; or else I die in vain.

EDWARD.

Raise, raise, my Eleonora, thy sweet eyes;
Once more behold thy children—

ELEONORA.

Oh!—'tis darkness—
A deadly weight———

EDWARD.

Thou leav'st me then for ever

ELEONORA.

Where am I?—Ah!—a tenant still to pain;
The quivering flame of life leaps up a little.
Meantime, my Edward, 'tis my last request,
That thou wouldst leave me, while I yet enjoy
A parting gleam of thought.—Leave me to Heaven!—
Gloster, farewell; be careful of the prince;
Attend him hence, and double now thy friendship.

EDWARD.

Barbarian! off!—Ah! whither wouldst thou drag me?

GLOSTER.

My lord, in pity to the princess—

EDWARD.

Oh!

ELEONORA.

Farewell! farewell!—Receive my last adieu;
Edward, my dearest lord, farewell for ever!

EDWARD.

O word of horror!—Can I?—No! I cannot!—
There, take me, lead me, hurl me to perdition!

SCENE VI.

ELEONORA, DARAXA, THEALD, *Attendants.*

ELEONORA.

'Tis past, the bitterness of death is past.—
Alas! Daraxa, I can ne'er requite
Thy generous cares for me. Thou art the cause
My Edward lives, my children have a father,
Thy heaven-inspir'd proposal.—Tell him, Theald,
That, in the troubled moments of our parting,
I had forgot to beg he would restore
Th' Arabian princess to her friends and country.—
Thy hand—this sure, howe'er in faith we differ,
Humanity, the soul of all religion,
May well permit.

DARAXA.

By Virtue's sacred fire!
Our paradise, the garden of the blest,
Ne'er smil'd upon a purer soul than thine.

For me, think not of me; such are my woes,
That I disdain all care, detest relief:
My name is trod in dust; thine beams for ever,
The richest gem that crowns the worth of woman.

ELEONORA.

The guilt of Selim cannot stain thy virtues:
It rather lends them lustre.—Bear me back
My dear attendants: and good Theald, come,
Come, aid my mounting soul to spring away,
From the lov'd fetters of this kindred clay.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

THEALD, *and a* GENTLEMAN *belonging to him.*

THEALD.

To me a dervise!—Thro' the furious camp,
Yet raging at the perfidy of Selim,
How did he safely pass?

GENTLEMAN.

Sir, he had fallen
A victim to their vengeance: but he told them,
His life was of importance to the prince,
That he who struck him stabb'd the heart of Edward.
This stay'd their rage; then, after a strict search,
They let him pass thro' ranks of glaring eyes.
I have besides to say, an English ship,
And one from Italy, are just arriv'd:
The first brings great dispatches to prince Edward;
The other, holy father, these to you. [*Kneeling.*

THEALD.

Go, bid this dervise enter.

SCENE II.

THEALD: *he opens and looks on the dispatches.*

Awful Heaven!
Great ruler of the various heart of man!
Since thou hast rais'd me to conduct thy church,
Without the base cabal too often practis'd,
Beyond my wish, my thought; give me the lights,

The virtues which that sacred trust requires:
A loving, lov'd, unterrifying power,
Such as becomes a father: humble wisdom;
Plain, primitive sincerity; kind zeal
For truth and virtue, rather than opinions;
And, above all, the charitable soul
Of healing peace and christian moderation.——
The *dervise* comes.——

SCENE III.

THEALD, SELIM *disguised as a Dervise.*

THEALD.

With me what would'st thou, dervise?

SELIM.

The princess Eleonora, lives she still?

THEALD.

She lives, and that is all.

SELIM.

Allah be prais'd!
Then lives the honour of the brightning name
Of Saracen and Mussulman.

THEALD.

How, dervise!
What can wipe out the horror of this deed?

SELIM.

The deed was execrable; but my hand
This instant shall prevent its dire effect.
I bring a certain remedy for poison;
Nor can it come too late, while wandering life
Yet, with faint impulse, stirs along the veins.

THEALD.

Ha! dervise, art thou sure of what thou say'st?

SELIM.

Christian, I am; and therefore am I here.
Haste, lead me to the princess; tho' she lay
Even in the last extremity, tho' call'd
By the fierce angel who compels the dead,
Yet bold experience gives me room to hope.
Oft have I seen its vital touch diffuse
New vigour thro' the poison'd streams of life,
When almost settled into dead stagnation;
Swift as a southern gale unbinds the flood.
Say, wilt thou trust me with the trial, christian?

THEALD.

Thou know'st we have great reason for distrust;
But fear in those who can no longer hope,
Were idle and absurd.

SELIM.

Bright Heaven! what fear?
Is there a slave of such inhuman baseness
To add fresh outrage to a dying princess?
For virtue dying? look into my eye:
Does one weak ray there shun the keenest gaze?
Say, dost thou there behold so foul a bottom?

THEALD.

No; seeming truth and generous candour shine
In what thou say'st. Come, follow me, good dervise.

SCENE IV.

THEALD, SELIM *disguised*, DARAXA.

DARAXA.

At last, thro' various pangs, the dying princess
Sees the delivering moment, and demands
Thy presence, reverend christian.

THEALD.

Dervise, come.
Forbid it Heaven this aid should be too late!

SCENE V.

DARAXA.

Heaven! can it be?—The very face of Selim!—
'Tis he himself—I know him, 'tis the sultan;
And, as he shot athwart me, from his eye
Flash'd the proud lightning of affronted virtue.
He must be innocent; his being here
Is radiant proof he must.—O weak Daraxa!
What man of virtue more would deign to lodge
His image in thy breast?—Ah! what avails
The light unfounded love, the treacherous friendship,
That, with inhuman cowardice, gives up
A worthy man, to infamy and slander?—
They talk'd of aid—what aid?

[*A cry heard within.*

Alas! 'tis past!
Death must be in that cry.—O let me fly
To snatch one parting look.—But see the prince,

Rous'd by the sounds of sorrow, this way comes.
Unhappy prince! I venerate his tears.—
O gracious Allah! pity and support him. [*Exit.*

SCENE VI.

EDWARD.

That cry was death.—Alas! she is no more!
The matchless Eleonora is no more!—
Where am I?—Heavens!—Ah! what a hideous desert
Is now this world, this blasted world around me!
O sun! I hate thee, I abhor thy light,
That shews not Eleonora! Earth, thy joy,
Thy sweetness all is fled; all, all that made
Thy ways to me delightful, Eleonora!
O Eleonora! perish'd Eleonora!
For ever lost!—That tent! ah me! that tent!—
[*Going into the tent, starts back.*
I dare not enter there. There death displays
His utmost terrors.—Pale and lifeless, there
She lies, whose looks were love, whose beauty smil'd
The sweet effulgence of endearing virtue.—
And here I last beheld her—Ay, and how,
And how beheld her?—The remorseless image
Will haunt me to the grave.—I see her suffering,
With female softness, yet to pain superior;
Fearful and bold at once, with the strong hand
Of mighty love constraining feeble nature,
To steal me from affliction.—Let me fly
This fatal ground.—But whither shall I fly?—
To England—O I cannot bear the thought
Of e'er returning to that country more!
That country, witness of our happy days;

Where, at each step, remember'd bliss will sting
My soul to anguish. I already hear
Malice exclaim; nay, blushing Valour sigh;
Where is thy princess? where the wish of thousands?
The charm, the transport of the public eye?
Base prince! and art thou not asham'd to bring
No trophy home but Eleonora's corse?——
The grave too is shut up, that last retreat
Of wretched mortals—Yes, my word is pass'd,
To Eleonora pass'd. Our orphan children
Bind me to life.—O dear, O dangerous passions!—
The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what does he regard his single woes?
But when, alas! he multiplies himself
To dearer selves, to the lov'd tender fair;
To those whose bliss, whose beings hang upon him,
To helpless children; then, O! then, he feels
The point of misery festering in his heart,
And weakly weeps his fortune like a coward.
Such, such am I! undone—

SCENE VII.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

EDWARD.

My lord of Gloster,
I thought my orders were to be alone.

GLOSTER.

Forgive my fond intrusion—But I cannot
Be so regardless of thy welfare, Edward,
As to obey these orders.

EDWARD.

But they shall,
Shall be obey'd.—I will enjoy my sorrows,
All that is left me now.

GLOSTER.

The more thy grief,
Just in its cause but frantic in degree,
Seeks aggravating solitude, the more
It suits my love and duty to attend thee,
To try to sooth——

EDWARD.

Away! thou never shalt.
Not all that idle wisdom can suggest,
All the vain talk of proud unfeeling reason,
Shall rob me of one tear.

GLOSTER.

Of Nature's tears
I would not rob thee: they invigorate virtue;
Soften, at once, and fortify the heart;
But when they rise to speak this desperate language,
They then grow tears of weakness; yes——

EDWARD.

I care not.
Weakness, whate'er they be, I will indulge them;
Will, in despite of thee and all mankind,
Devote my joyless days for ever to them.

GLOSTER.

Reason and virtue then are empty names?

EDWARD.

Hence! leave me to my fate.—You have undone me;
You have made shipwreck of my peace, among you;

My happiness and honour; and I now
Roam the detested world, a careless wretch.

GLOSTER.

Thy honour yet is safe; how long I know not,
For full it drives upon the rocks of paſſion.
O all ye pitying Powers that rule mankind!
Who so unworthy but may proudly deck him
With this fair-weather virtue, that exults,
Glad, o'er the summer main?—The tempest comes,
The rough winds rage aloud; when from the helm
This virtue shrinks, and in a corner lies
Lamenting.—Heavens! if privileg'd from trial,
How cheap a thing were virtue!

EDWARD.

Do—insult me—
Rail, spare me not—rail, Gloster, all the world—
But know, mean time, thou canst not make me feel thee—
I have no more connection with mankind.

GLOSTER.

Insult thee, Edward? Do these tears insult thee—
These old man's tears?—Friendship, my prince, can weep,
As well as love.—But while I weep thy fortune,
Let me not weep thy virtue sunk beneath it.—
Thou hast no more connection with mankind!—
Put off thy craving senses, the deep wants
And infinite dependencies of nature;
Put off that ſtrongeſt paſſion of the soul,
Soul of the soul, love to society;
Put off all gratitude for what is past,
All generous hope of what is yet to come;
Put off each sense of honour and of duty;
Then use this language.—Let me tell thee, Edward,

Thou hast connections with mankind, and great ones,
Thou know'st not of; connections that might rouse
The smallest spark of honour in thy breast,
To wide-awaken'd life and fair ambition.

EDWARD.

What dost thou mean?

GLOSTER.

What mean?—this day, in England,
How many ask of Palestine their king,
Edward their king.—Read these.

EDWARD, *opening the dispatches.*

O Gloster!—Gloster!—
Alas! my royal father is no more:
The gentlest of mankind, the most abus'd!
Of gracious nature, a fit soil for virtues,
Till there his creatures sow'd their flattering lies,
And made him—No, not all their cursed arts
Could ever make him insolent or cruel.
O my deluded father! Little joy
Had'st thou in life; led from thy real good,
And genuine glory, from thy people's love,
That noblest aim of kings, by smiling traitors.—
Thus weak of heart, thus desolate of soul,
Ah, how unfit am I, with steady hand,
To rule a troubled state!—She, she is gone,
Softner of care, the dear reward of toil,
The source of virtue! She, who to a crown
Had lent new splendor, who had grac'd a throne,
Like the sweet seraph Mercy tempering Justice.
O Eleonora! any life with thee,
The plainest could have charm'd; but pomp and pleasure,
All that a loving people can bestow,

By thee unshar'd, will only serve to fret
The wounds of woe, and make me more unhappy.

GLOSTER.

Now is the time, now lift thy soul to virtue.
Behold a crisis, sent by Heaven, to save thee.
Whate'er, my prince, can touch, or can command,
Can quicken or exalt the heart of man,
Now speaks to thine.—Thy children claim their father,
Nay, more than father, claim their double parent;
For such thy promise was to Eleonora:
Thy subjects claim their king, thy troops their chief:
The manes of thy ancestors consign
Their long-descended glory to thy hands:
And thy dejected country calls upon thee
To save her, raise her, to restore her honour,
To spread her sure dominion o'er the deep,
And bid her yet arise the scourge of France.
Angels themselves might envy thee the joy
That waits thy will, of doing general good:
Of spreading virtue, chearing lonely worth;
Of dashing down the proud; of guarding arts,
The sacred rights of industry and freedom;
Of making a whole generous people happy.
O Edward! Edward! the most piercing transports
Of the best love can never equal these!——
And, need I add—thy Eleonora's death
Calls out for vengeance?——

EDWARD.

Ha!

GLOSTER.

If thou, indeed,
Dost honour thus her memory, then shew it,

Not by soft tears and womanish complaints,
But shew it like a man.——

EDWARD.

I will.

GLOSTER.

Yon towers——

EDWARD.

'Tis true——

GLOSTER.

Yon guilty towers——

EDWARD.

Insult us still!

GLOSTER.

The murderer of thy princess riots there.

EDWARD.

But shall not long!—Thou art my better genius:—
Thou brave old man! thou hast recall'd my virtue—
I was benumb'd with sorrow—what—or where—
I know not—never to have thought of this.
Bright Virtue, welcome!—vigour of the mind,
The flame from Heaven that lights up higher being,
Thrice welcome! with thy noble servant Anger,
And just Revenge!—Hence, let us to the camp,
And there transfuse our soul into the troops.
This sultan's blood will ease my fever'd breast.—
Yes, I will take such vengeance on this city,
That all mankind shall turn their eyes to Jaffa,
And as they see her turrets sunk in dust,
Shall learn to dread the terrors of the just.

ACT V. SCENE I.

SELIM.

O my Daraxa! thou hast charm'd my soul!
This reconciling interview has sooth'd
My troubled bosom into tender joy:
As when the spring first, on the soften'd top
Of Lebanon, unbinds her lovely tresses,
And shakes her blooming sweets from Carmel's brow.—
It only now remains to see the prince.

SCENE II.

SELIM, THEALD.

THEALD.

I sought thee, worthy dervise.

SELIM.

Reverend Christian,
My toiling thoughts can find no fix'd repose,
Till the wrong'd sultan's vindicated honour
Shine out as bright as yon unsully'd sky.
Conduct me to the prince—I claim that justice.—
It stings my conscious soul with sick impatience,
To think what Selim suffers. For a man,
Who loves the ways of truth and open virtue,
To lie beneath the burning imputation
Of baseness and of crimes—such horrid crimes!—
O 'tis a keen unsufferable torment!—

Come, let me then discharge this other part
Of my commission.

THEALD.

That thou soon shalt do.
He strait will come this way, the king of England,
Such now he is. Mean time, 'tis fit to tell thee,
He must be manag'd gently; for his passions
Are all abroad, in wild confusion hurl'd:
The winds, the floods, and lightning mix together.—
I need not say how little, in this uproar,
Avails the broken thwarted light of reason.

SELIM.

Fear not.—I trust in innocence and truth.

THEALD.

He cannot long delay; for, as I enter'd,
I saw him parting from the hurried camp,
That lighten'd wide around him: burnish'd helms,
And glittering spears, and ardent thronging soldiers,
Demanding all the signal, when to storm
These walls devoted to their vengeance.——

SELIM.

Ha!
Then let us quickly find him.—But he comes.

SCENE III.

SELIM, THEALD, EDWARD, GLOSTER.

EDWARD.

Whence is it those barbarians here again,
Those base, those murdering cowards, dare be seen?
What new accurs'd attempt is now on foot?

What new assassination ?—Start not, dervise,
Tinge not thy caitiff cheek with redd'ning honour.
What, thou !—Dost thou pretend to feel reproach ?—
Art thou not of a shameless race of people,
Harden'd in arts of cruelty and blood,
Perfidious all ?—Yes, have you not profan'd
The faith of nations, broke the holy tie
That binds the families of earth together,
That gives even foes to meet with generous trust,
And teaches war security ?—Your prince,
Your prince has done it.—And you should hereafter
Be hunted from your dens like savage beasts ;
Be crush'd like serpents !

THEALD.

Sir, this dervise comes
To clear the sultan Selim from that crime,
Which you, with strong appearance, charge upon him.

EDWARD.

Appearance, Theald ! with unquestion'd proof.
Doubtless the villain would be glad to change
The course by Nature fix'd ; enjoy his crimes,
Without their evil.—But he shall not 'scape me.

SELIM.

If, king of England, in this weighty matter,
On which depends the weal and life of thousands,
You love and seek the truth, let reason judge,
Cool, steady, quiet, and dispassion'd reason,
For never yet, since the proud selfish race
Of men began to jar, did passion give,
Nor ever can it give, a right decision.

EDWARD.

Reason has judg'd, and passion shall chastise,
Shall make you howl, ye cowards of the East !—

What can be clearer?—This vile prince of Jaffa!
This infamy of princes! sends a ruffian
(By his own hand and seal commission'd, sends him)
To treat of peace: and, as I read his letters,
The villain stabs me.—This, if this wants light,
There is no certainty in human reason;
If this not shines with all-convincing truth,
Yon sun is dark.—And yet these cowards come,
With lying shifts, and low elusive arts—
O! it inflames my anger into madness!
This added insult on our understanding,
This treacherous attempt to steal away
The only joy and treasure of my life—
Sweet sacred vengeance for my murder'd princess.

SELIM.

The cursed wretch who did assail thy life,
O king of England, was indeed an envoy
Sent by the prince of Jaffa: this we own;
But then he was an execrable bigot,
Who, for such horrid purposes, had crept
Into the cheated sultan's court and service,
As by the traitor's papers we have learn'd.
For know, there lives, upon the craggy cliffs
Of wild Phœnician mountains, a dire race,
A nation of assassins. Dreadful zeal,
Fierce and intolerant of all religion
That differs from their own, is the black soul
Of that infernal state. Soon as their chief,
The Old Man (so they stile him) of the mountains,
Gives out his baleful will, however fell,
However wicked and abhorr'd it be,
Tho' cloth'd in danger, the most cruel death,
They, swift and silent, glide thro' every land,

As fly the gloomy ministers of vengeance,
Famine and Plague: they lie for years conceal'd,
Make light of oaths, nay sometimes change religion,
And never fail to execute his orders.
Of these the villain was, these ruffian saints,
The curse of earth, the terror of mankind:
And thy engagement, prince, in this crusade,
That was the reason whence they sought thy life.

EDWARD.

False, false as hell! the lie of guilty fear!
You all are bigots, robbers, ruffians all!
It is the very genius of your nation.
Vindictive rage, the thirst of blood consumes you:
You live by rapine, thence your empire rose;
And your religion is a mere pretence
To rob and murder in the name of Heaven.

SELIM.

Be patient, prince, be more humane and just.
You have your virtues, have your vices too;
And we have ours. The liberal hand of Nature
Has not created us, nor any nation
Beneath the blessed canopy of Heaven,
Of such malignant clay, but each may boast
Their native virtues, and their Maker's bounty.
You call us bigots.—O! canst thou with that
Reproach us, christian prince? What brought thee hither?
What else but bigotry? What dost thou here?
What else but persecute?—The truth is great,
Greater than thou, and I will give it way:
Even thou thyself, in all thy rage, wilt hear it.—
From their remotest source, these holy wars,
What have they breath'd but bigotry and rapine?
Did not the first Crusaders, when their zeal

Should have shone out the purest, did they not,
Led by the frantic hermit who began
The murderous trade, thro' their own countries spread
The woes their vice could not reserve for ours?——
Tho' this exceeds the purport of my message,
Yet must I thus, insulted in my country,
Insulted in religion, bid thee think,
O king of England, on the different conduct
Of Saracens and Christians; when beneath
Your pious Godfrey, in the first crusade,
Jerusalem was sack'd; and when beneath
Our generous Saladin, it was retaken.——
O hideous scene! my soul within me shrinks,
Abhorrent, from the view!—Twelve thousand wretches,
Receiv'd to mercy, void of all defence,
Trusting to plighted faith, to purchas'd safety—
Behold these naked wretches, in cold blood,
Men, women, children, murder'd! basely murder'd!—
The holy temple, which you came to rescue,
Regorges with the barbarous profanation:—
The streets run dismal torrents: Drown'd in blood,
The very soldier sickens at his carnage.
Couldst thou, O sun! behold the blasting sight,
And lift again thy sacred eye on mortals?—
A ruthless race! who can do this, can do it,
To please the general Father of mankind!—
While nobler Saladin——

EDWARD.

Away! be gone!
With thee, vile dervise, what have I to do?
I lose my hour of vengeance, I debase me,
To hold this talk with thee.

SELIM.

While truth and reason
Speak from my tongue, vile dervise as I am,
Yet am I greater than the highest monarch,
Who, from blind fury, grows the slave of passion.
Besides, I come to justify a prince,
Howe'er in other qualities below thee,
In love of goodness, truth, humanity,
And honour, Sir, thy equal—yes, thy equal.—

EDWARD.

What! how! compare me with a damn'd assassin!
A matchless villain!—Ha! presumptuous dervise!
Thou gnaw'st thy quivering lip—A smother'd passion
Shakes thro' thy frame.—What villany is that
Thou dar'st not utter?—Wert thou not a wretch,
Protected by thy habit, this right hand
Should crush thee into atoms.—Hence! away!—
Go tell thy master that I hold him base,
Beyond the power of words to speak his baseness!
A coward! an assassinating coward!
And when I once have dragg'd him from his city—
Which I will straitway do—I then will make him,
In all the gall and bitterness of guilt,
Grinding the vengeful steel betwixt his teeth,
Will make the traitor own it.—

SELIM, *discovering himself.*

Never!

EDWARD.

Ha!

SELIM.

Thou canst not, haughty monarch:—I am he!
I am this Selim! this insulted Selim!
Yet clear as day, and will confound thy passion.

EDWARD.

Thou Selim?

SELIM.

I.

EDWARD.

Was ever guilt so bold?

SELIM.

Did ever innocence descend to fear?

EDWARD.

This bears some show of honour. Wilt thou then
Decide it by the sword?

SELIM.

I will do more——

EDWARD.

How more?

SELIM.

Decide it by superior reason.

EDWARD.

No weak evasions.

SELIM.

If I not convince thee,
If by thyself I am not of this crime
Acquitted, then I grant thee thy demand.
Nay more, yon yielded city shall be thine:
For know, hot prince, I should disdain a throne
I could not fill with honour. Were I guilty,
I should not tremble at thy threatning voice;
No, 'tis myself I fear.

EDWARD.

What shall I think?

SELIM.

Hear but one witness, and I ask no more,
To clear my name. The witness is a woman.
Her looks are truth; fair uncorrupted faith
Beams from her eyes. Thou ne'er canst doubt such beauty;
For 'tis th' expression of a spotless soul.

EDWARD.

Curse on thy mean luxurious Eastern arts
Of cowardice! Thou would'st seduce my vengeance—
But I detest all beauty—Barbarous sultan!
Ah! thou hast murder'd beauty! thy fell crime—
Haste, Gloster, haste—in sight of camp and city,
Prepare the lists—Now shew thyself a prince,
Or die in shameful tortures like a slave.

SELIM.

I came not hither or to dread thy wrath,
Or court thy mercy.

GLOSTER.

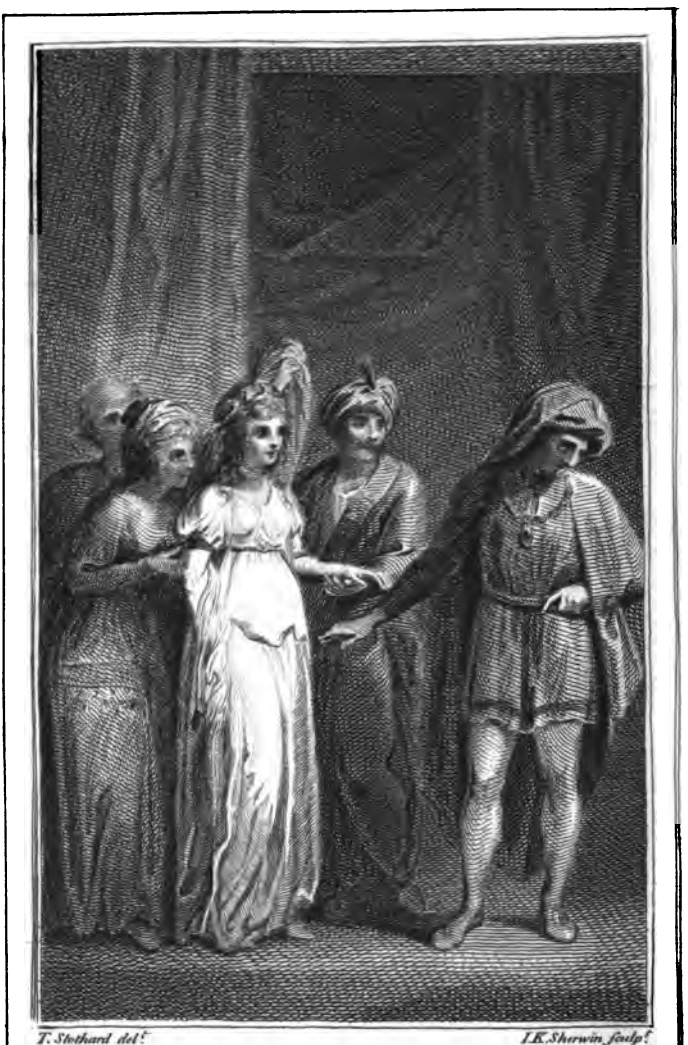
Sir, you cannot justly
Refuse him his demand. The fervent soul
Of undissembled innocence, methinks,
Is felt in what he says. First hear this person;
And if she gives not full conviction, then,
Have then recourse to what should always be
The last appeal of reasonable beings,
Brute force.

EDWARD.

Well then, conduct her hither, sultan.—

[Selim *goes out.*

Ah! my disorder'd mind! from thought to thought,
Uncertain, toss'd, the wreck of stormy passion!



No, beauty, shall no more engage my Eyes.

Edward, & Eleonora, Act V. Scene IV.

London, Published, Jan.y 1.st 1788, by T. Cadell, in the Strand.

This rage a while supports me; but I feel
It will desert me soon, and I again
Shall soon relapse to misery and weakness.—
O Eleonora! little didst thou think,
How deeply wretched thy dire gift of life
Would make me!

SCENE IV.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD; *to them* SELIM, *conducting* ELEONORA; DARAXA.

SELIM.

Raise thy eyes, O king of England,
To the bright witness of my blameless honour.

EDWARD.

No; beauty shall no more engage my eyes,
It shall no more profane the shrine devoted
To the sweet image of my Eleonora.—
Let her declare her knowledge in this matter.

ELEONORA.

Will not my Edward bless me with a look?

EDWARD.

What angel borrows Eleonora's voice!—
O thou pale shade of her I weep for ever!
Permit me thus to worship thee.—Thou art!—
Amazing!—Heaven!—thou art my Eleonora!
My Eleonora's self! my dear, my true,
My living Eleonora!——What—to whom
Owe I this miracle? this better life?—
Oppressive joy!—owe I my Eleonora?

ELEONORA.

To him, that generous prince, who put his life,
His honour on the desperate risque to save me,
When in the arms of death.—Depriv'd of voice,
Of motion, and of sense, benumb'd I lay;
My frighted train around me thought me dead,
And fill'd the tent with cries; my heart alone
Still feebly beat; but soon the poison's force
Had driven out life from that its last retreat;
If, in the moment of approaching fate,
He, like my guardian angel, had not brought
An antidote of wond'rous power, by which
I am to light restor'd—to thee, my Edward!

EDWARD.

Did he, did he preserve thee? He, whom thus
I have with such inhuman pride insulted?
O blind, O brutish, O injurious rage!—
They, they are wise, who, when they feel thy madness,
Seal up their lips.—And canst thou then forgive me,
Thou who hast o'er me gain'd that noblest triumph,
The triumph of humanity?—Thou canst;
'Tis easier for the generous to forgive,
Than for offence to ask it.

SELIM.

Use not, prince,
So harsh a word. More than forgive, I love
Thy noble heat, thy beautiful disorder.
O! I am too much man; I feel, myself,
Too much the charming force of human passions,
E'er to pretend, with supercilious brow,
With proud affected virtue, to disdain them.

EDWARD.

How, generous sultan, how shall I requite thee?
Here—take thy lov'd Daraxa, whom I meant
To have restor'd, when this misfortune happen'd;
But secret-working Heaven ordain'd her stay,
To save us all.

SELIM.

Wert thou the lord of earth,
Thou could'st not give me more!—my dear Daraxa!

EDWARD.

Hence to the camp, my Gloster.—Bid the soldiers
Forsake the trenches—Let unbounded joy
Reign, fearless, o'er the mingled camp and city.—
Go, tell my faithful soldiers, that their queen
My Eleonora lives!—A prize beyond
The chance of war to give!—She lives to soften
My too imperious temper, and to make them,
To make my people happy!—O my soul!
What love e'er equall'd thine?—O dearest! best!
Pride of thy sex! inimitable goodness!
Whenever woman henceforth shall be prais'd
For conjugal affection, men will say,
There shine the virtues of an Eleonora!—
Transporting bliss!—How bountiful is Heaven!
Depressing often, but to raise us more.
Let never those despair who follow virtue.
Love—gratitude—divide me—Once more, sultan,
Forgive me, pardon my mistaken zeal,
That left my country, cross'd the stormy seas,
To war with thee, brave prince—to war with honour.
Now that my passions give me leave to think;
The hand of Heaven appears in what I suffer'd;
My erring zeal has suffer'd by a zealot.

SELIM.

It does, O king. And venerable Christian,
I know thy moderation will excuse me;
But since by ruling Wisdom (who unweigh'd,
Unmeant, does nought) men are so various made,
So various turn'd, that in opinions they
Must blindly think, or take a different way;
In spite of force, since judgment will be free;
Then let us in this righteous mean agree:
Let holy rage, let persecution cease;
Let the head argue, but the heart be peace;
Let all mankind in love of what is right,
In virtue and humanity, unite.

EPILOGUE.

BY A FRIEND.

THESE Poets are such fools!—The man behind,
Who wrote this play—a simple soul, I find—
Believes with all his heart, there was a wife,
Who needs would die—to save a husband's life!
He in the printed chronicles has read it:
And true it is—Sir *Richard Baker* said it.

Why what an ass these books do make a man!
Read nature—then believe it—you who can.
Look round this town—the question is not—whether
Spouse *dies* for spouse, but who will *live* together?
Of old, they say, a husband was a lover:
But, thank our stars! those foolish days are over:
To such substantial prudence are we come,
We wed not heart to heart—but plumb to plumb.
What sense? what beauty? are not now the things:
But can *he* settle—*up* to what *she* brings?

Yet in this easy, all-forgiving age,
Bear with such moral fooleries—on the stage.
Perhaps too, there may be some gentle soul,
Who rather likes to weep—than win a vole;
Who thinks that there *are* charms in generous love,
And would to *Edward*, *Eleonora* prove.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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